



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

CHILDREN'S TREASURY
OF
BIBLE STORIES

PART II

NEW TESTAMENT

MRS. HERMAN GASKOIN



1062. b5/2
f.



600098618

1062. f. $\frac{65}{2}$



CHILDREN'S TREASURY
OF
BIBLE STORIES.

PART II.—NEW TESTAMENT.

BY
MRS. HERMAN GASKOIN.

EDITED
BY THE REV. G. F. MACLEAR, D.D.

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1879.

The Right of Translation and Reproduction is Reserved.



CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I.—LOOKING FORWARD	3
II.—THE PREPARER OF THE WAY	10
III.—THE BLESSED LIFE	17
IV.—THE BLESSED LIFE	25
V.—THE BLESSED LIFE	34
VI.—THE BLESSED LIFE	43
VII.—THE BLESSED LIFE	50
VIII.—THE BLESSED LIFE	57
IX.—THE BLESSED LIFE	62
X.—THE BLESSED LIFE	69
XI.—THE BLESSED LIFE	77
XII.—THE BLESSED LIFE	86
XIII.—THE BLESSED LIFE	93
XIV.—THE FIFTY DAYS	101
XV.—AFTERWARDS	110
XVI.—ST. STEPHEN AND ST. PAUL	119

Children's Treasury of Bible Stories.

PART II.—NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

LOOKING FORWARD.

QUITE at the beginning of the First Part of these little Bible Stories, I pointed out to you that *beauty* was the first gift of God to man.

Notwithstanding all the "shadows" cast across this world, for so many ages, by sin, that great gift is still lavished upon us day by day. But many of us are only half conscious of its perfection: what we can always see we do not always properly value; very often, indeed, we do not see it—that is, we do not notice it—at all.

Take the sky, as a single instance. We are far too apt merely to glance up at it now and then, just to see what the weather is likely to be. But hear the words of a great writer, who tells us that no Work of God is more plainly intended for our pleasure,—quite apart from our service and our help. *Every essential purpose of the sky—he says—might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture of picture, glory after glory, and working still upon s*

exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly.

Now the New Testament ushers us into the Presence of a beauty which far surpasses even the loveliness of the fair and glorious sky. It is what we call *spiritual beauty*. The beauty of Perfect Goodness, expressed in a Character.

I think I would rather not tell you why a few words about the sky have seemed to me, on the whole, to find a fitting place just here. I mean, why I have ventured to speak of its beauty—so easy to be seen, yet so seldom loved—almost in the same breath with the Living Beautifulness of Which the New Testament is the record. For perhaps, after a time, if you begin to watch the sky more than you have been accustomed to do, and to mark how high, yet how tender—how glorious, yet how pure—how constant, yet how varied—above all, how *open to every one* it is, you will perceive the reason without being told. And that would be very pleasant.

The Old Testament, as a rule, gives us one account of many lives; the New Testament gives us various accounts of One Life. The Old Testament tells us of a promise; the New Testament shows us the fulfilment of that promise. The Old Testament speaks of countless sacrifices; the New Testament reveals the One Sacrifice to Which they all pointed. Round the One Life, Which is the Beginning, and the Centre, and the End of the New Testament, move other lives indeed, but only as stars move round the sun.

So sublime was this Perfect Life, so utterly different from any that was ever lived before, or has ever been lived since, that I feel quite unworthy even to attempt

to tell you about it. In such a Presence we should kneel while we behold.

While we are thus pausing on the very threshold of New Testament history, I am anxious to draw your attention to a point which seems to me very important. It is this,—that if we wish properly to understand and fairly to judge people who lived long ago, we must take the age and the circumstances in which they lived fully into account. You were once infants, and have *grown* into children, and will *grow* by degrees into men and women. So, the history of the human race is a history of *growth*. Fresh discoveries bring fresh responsibilities, and thus, as the light of knowledge increases, the standard of conduct rises. The later a person lives in the world's history, the more is to be expected of him. In very early times, when men's knowledge was scanty, and their passions were wild and uncontrolled, God required them chiefly to refrain from doing this and that wrong thing. *Do not kill, do not steal, do not covet*, said the law of Moses. And earlier still, in that First Garden, where time and size are so dim that we can discern them only imperfectly, the single command was *Eat not*. But in the New Testament things are changed. The demand is broader, and deeper, and higher. It is no longer *Do not* only, but *Do*. And not only *do*, even, but also—and above all—*Be*. Not for our acts alone, but for our very thoughts, we find ourselves held accountable. For a Light, piercing the dark consciences of men, had now come into the world. *The Life—the One Life* of which I have spoken—*was the Light of men*.

I cannot relate to you all that befell the scattered Jewish people during the period which lay between the closing date of the Old, and the opening date of the New Testament. Those who had returned to their native country changed masters again and again. The Persian gave place to the Greek rule. And when the empire of Alexander the Great was broken up

after his death, and divided among his generals, Palestine was coveted as a possession, and became the object of many fierce struggles. Years rolled past, and there came a time when the Jews were obliged to endure the bitterest persecutions, while every possible insult was offered by their heathen masters to their national religion. This period of suffering, however, was followed by an interval of independence, and hope once more cheered the down-trodden people. But at last they bowed beneath the *Roman* yoke.

It is always an effort to picture the Past, even to oneself. And it is doubly difficult to bring clearly before the minds of children a state of affairs totally different from what they see around them. Yet I want you to realize, at least in part, the condition of the world just before New Testament history opens, because nothing will help you so much to understand the history itself.

The government of the world at the present day is divided. Kingdoms, empires, and republics exist side by side, but each is ruled or directed differently. But at the time of which I want you now to think,—that is, some few years before the Appearance of the long-promised Redeemer on the earth—the direction of *all* affairs, and power over the entire world, as it was then known, were in the hands of one man. The Roman Empire was the world, and Octavian—or Augustus—Cæsar, the Roman emperor, was the world's master. He lived at Rome, and he governed his distant provinces by *deputies*, who represented him. The deputy who ruled the Holy Land was named Herod. He was a very wicked man, and at this time his reign was drawing towards its end.

The Jewish people, dispersed and dejected, were everywhere filled with a feverish expectation of the Messiah, *the Christ*. His Coming was generally believed among them to be close at hand. But ph over their foreign enemies was what they

chiefly desired, and, in the Holy Land especially, they looked for a Conquering LORD, Who should pour upon them the blessings of freedom and prosperity, and enable them to take vengeance upon their oppressors.

War had ceased in the vast Roman empire, for resistance had everywhere been found useless. The world was at peace. But it was a peace unworthy of the name. The period was remarkable for its wickedness. The heavy costs of war had produced general poverty; poverty tempted to dishonesty and cruelty; oppression bred hardheartedness. Unbelief reigned almost supreme. Men had dropped the reins on the necks of their own evil passions, and law and self-respect seemed to have vanished together.

The Jews were deeply tainted with the general corruption. Still the outward ceremonial of the Temple worship was kept up. Sacrifices and services succeeded one another, and in spite of the prevailing want of faith there were—as there had been in Elijah's day—some true and devout servants of God.

Such were Zacharias and Elisabeth, a pious priest and his wife, who lived near Hebron. They were elderly people now, and had never had any children. This, in the ancient Oriental world, was regarded as a great trial. Zacharias and Elisabeth, however, accepted their lot as from God's Hand, and did not now expect that it would ever be altered. They led upright, prayerful lives, and clung fast to the faith which so many of their countrymen had forsaken.

The national priests were classed in twenty-four divisions. The Temple ministrations were entrusted to each division in turn, and the particular priests who were to go up to Jerusalem were regularly appointed by lot. Each division was thus represented in the Temple twice in the course of the year. But there were so many priests altogether that the rarely fell twice upon the same person, and very

of them lived and died without ever enjoying the honour at all. To Zacharias, however, one autumn, the coveted lot did fall, and leaving his quiet home, he went up to Jerusalem, and there entered at once upon his sacred duties. They lasted for eight days, including two sabbaths.

Some years before this, Herod had tried to please the Jews, and to make them forget his many crimes, by rebuilding the Temple on a very grand scale. It was now, to all intents and purposes, finished, though for many years afterwards additions were made from time to time. It was very splendid, for Herod had spent treasure upon it which he could not properly afford, but I have no room here for a description of any part of it. You will remember enough about the plan of the Tabernacle, however, to understand what I am going to tell you now.

Every morning at nine o'clock, and every afternoon at three, a priest entered the Holy Place to sprinkle the incense-offering on the golden altar. He was accompanied by an assistant priest, who withdrew as soon as he had made the necessary preparations. The privilege of sprinkling the incense-offering, like the other priestly functions, was bestowed by lot. One day, during his week of attendance in the Temple, the lot fell upon Zacharias. So, in his white robes, with bare feet and covered head, he went slowly up, through court after court, to the entrance of the Holy Place. Then a bell rang, all the other ministrants on duty in the Temple took their places, and the people assembled in the various courts composed themselves for prayer. Zacharias disappeared within the sacred enclosure, and in due course his attendant left him alone there, separated from the Holy of Holies itself only by the splendid Veil-of-Partition. Silvery clouds of fragrant smoke presently arose from the kindled incense,—then, kneeling before the altar, he paused, in prayer and adoration. Suddenly, he became aware

that he was not alone. Lifting his eyes he saw, to the right of the altar, a glorious angel, who thus addressed him, dispelling his gathering fear: *Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.* This intelligence was in itself amazing. But when the angel went on to declare that this son, bound from his birth by the vows of a Nazarite, should be the immediate forerunner of the Messiah Himself, Zacharias found it difficult to believe such wondrous tidings. *Whereby shall I know this?* he asked, hesitatingly. "And the angel, answering, said unto him, *I am Gabriel, that stand in the Presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And behold thou shalt be dumb and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.*"

Meanwhile the people were anxiously waiting for Zacharias to return. His re-appearance would be the signal for the laying of the sacrifice upon the altar, accompanied by a joyous outburst of the beautiful Temple music. Great, then, was their uneasy wonder at the unusual delay. But at last he did appear. It was at once evident, however, that something extraordinary had happened, and he did his best to explain, by signs, that he could not speak. In this way his ministrations at Jerusalem came to an end. He returned home at the appointed time, musing deeply, we may be sure, as he went, on the marvellous things that had happened during his short absence.

In the course of the following year, the son prophesied by the angel was duly born to Elisabeth, and on the eighth day after his birth he was circumcised, in obedience to the law. The friends assembled on the occasion wished to give the child his father's name. But Zacharias signified his disapproval, and announced in written characters that the name was to be *John*.

which means "the grace of God." No sooner had he thus obeyed the word of the angel, than the power of speech was restored to him, and he uttered loud words of praise to the Almighty.

These remarkable events, we read, were *noised abroad, throughout all the hill country of Judæa. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be? And the Hand of the Lord was with him. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.*

We often chant the inspired psalm in which the feelings of Zacharias found vent, in Church. With one of its verses, which is addressed directly to the child John, I must end this chapter: *Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest! for thou shalt go before the Face of the Lord, to prepare His ways.*

CHAPTER II.

THE PREPARER OF THE WAY.

SCRIPTURE is all but silent about the childhood of John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth. We are told that he *grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.* That is all. But the latter part of the sentence needs a little explanation.

I have already told you how wild and wicked men were at the time of John's birth, and how few really faithful servants of God were to be found, even among the Jews. But there were nevertheless a great many people in Palestine who were strict keepers of the *letter* of the law. There were three principal classes of *thinkers* among the Jews of that day. I will try just to sketch them for you, very roughly indeed. I use the word *thinker* merely to distinguish these

persons from the thoughtless mass who obeyed nothing but their own impulses.

I. The *Pharisees*, who prided themselves on their correct observance of ceremonies, and affected to be more religious than their neighbours.

II. The *Sadducees*,—or followers of Sadoc—a smaller party, who reasoned more and believed less than the Pharisees, and whose opinions were to some extent coloured by the teaching of learned Greeks.

III. The *Essenes*, with whom, at the present moment, I am chiefly concerned.

You will find when you study what is called “general history,” in years to come, that in all lawless periods, like that which we are now considering, there has been a tendency among sober, earnest men, to fly to solitude as a refuge from the public disorder. When such persons have retreated one by one, each to live quite alone, they have been called *hermits*. But sometimes many have retired together, establishing *communities*, and receiving new members from time to time, though still living always in deep seclusion, quite apart from the world. This is what the Essenes had done. They were about four thousand in number, and lived in scattered settlements in Syria and in the Holy Land, always as far as possible from the haunts of men. They were bound by very rigid rules, and kept the law with wonderful exactness. They threw aside the cares and the interests of this life, and instead of struggling against the evil of the world, they fled from it. But although their ideas were narrow, and although their way of seeking peace was a mistaken one, many members of the brotherhood were doubtless really worthy of esteem, and each colony was supported by the honest industry of those belonging to it. In those dark days, *any* striving after a higher life would probably win the respect of pious people like Zacharias and Elisabeth. Their son, as you know, was a

Nazarite from his birth, and, while yet a youth, he too vanished into the wilderness—not, indeed, to seek peace, like the Essenes, away from the world—but to prepare, alone with God, for the discharge of high and holy duties *in* the world.

Let me tell you—for I like to take you into my confidence—why I have spared the space, in such a very small book, for these few words about the Essenes. It was to help you to understand that the sudden disappearance of a person into a wild place like the desert, which—supposing such a thing to be possible in our country in these days—would amaze us very much, was not likely to excite any surprise at all in the Holy Land when John was young. The wilderness into which he withdrew was a barren region, stretching away, westward of Hebron, to the shores of the Dead Sea. It was very hot, and dry, and dreary. Its white chalk and limestone soil reflected the sunshine in a blinding glare. There was no shade, for there were no trees. Almost the only shrub to be found, even in its least exposed parts, was the *Cytisus albus*, or white-flowering broom. Nor was the humble companionship of friendly animals to be had, for scarcely a spring existed from end to end of the desert; and for water, dependence could only be placed on the shower-fed pools that lay in some of the hollows under the higher rocks. Sometimes, indeed, the dead silence was broken by the harsh cry of a passing vulture, or a scorpion moved suddenly among the loose-lying flints,—or a fox, perhaps, peeped out of a hole in the hot hillside. But such life as this rather heightened than lessened the loneliness.

Yet here, for many a year, echoed the footfall of the son of Zacharias. It is almost impossible for us to realize the extent of the privation which he chose to undergo. Shelter from storms and from the scorching sun, however, he doubtless found in the caverns

which abounded in the soft limestone, and, bare as the desert was, it yet provided him with two kinds of food. One was honey. The Holy Land was remarkable for the number of its wild bees. In the woods honey dropped from the trees, for wild combs nestled under the sheltering leaves; but the flowerless wilderness was the favourite storehouse. The limestone, crumbling everywhere into cavities large or small, offered the three advantages of warmth, dryness, and protection. In these recesses thousands of bees deposited the treasures which they brought from distant flowery fields. And it has always been the Eastern habit to eat honey, not sparingly as we do, for the sake of its flavour, but in large quantities, for the sake of its nourishment. The other kind of food which John found in the wilderness will strike you as still stranger than the honey. He ate *locusts*. These destructive creatures are of two kinds, those that run and those that leap. The "leaping" locusts were held by the law of Moses to be "clean," and fit for food, and they were plentiful in the wilderness. They are something like crickets, and something like grasshoppers, but much brighter—besides being varied—in colour. Their hind-wings are green, crimson, dark or light blue, yellow, scarlet, brown or white, according to the species. At the present day these insects are dried and sold for food in some parts of the East, but only the very poor will eat them.

John's dress was as coarse as his food. Try to picture him to yourselves. A worn, sunburnt man, with long flowing hair; shod with the commonest sandals, made—very likely—of plaited rushes, or of the bark of the palm-tree; clad in a loose garment of haircloth, drawn together at the waist by a rough leathern girdle. And in his eyes a steadfast look, which only devotion to a single lofty purpose could have written there. Such a figure will remind you

at once of the prophet Elijah ; and by and by I shall show you that these two great men were alike in something besides their appearance and their mode of life. But now I must hurry on to the time when John's long retirement came at last to an end. We do not know when it began, so we cannot tell how long it lasted. But at length he reappeared among men. Chastened, strengthened, and elevated by long communion with God and resolute discipline of himself, he was ready for his great work.

He came out of the wilderness, turned to the north, and passed along the banks of the Jordan until he came to a place called *Bethabara*, or—more correctly—*Bethany*. Here, where the river was shallow—for there was a ford, or crossing-place—he paused. The time had come, and God had called him forth.

The news soon spread that a wonderful stranger had appeared on the river-banks, full of a distinct and marvellous purpose, which he was declaring in equally distinct and marvellous words. From all the neighbouring districts curious crowds flocked eagerly towards the place where this mysterious preacher was reported to be. But curiosity gave place to awe when upon their astonished ears there broke this solemn cry : *Repent ye ! Repent ye ! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. I daresay you have sometimes seen a clear lake or pond, so still and smooth that the clouds, and the trees, and the water-lilies lay reflected in its waters as quietly as if they had been glass. And then, perhaps, while you were looking, a sudden breeze has sprung up and swept across this pond, ruffling the whole surface into ripples, so that all the images reflected in it were agitated and broken up. Well ; just in this way did the preaching of John affect the Jewish people. It roused great numbers of them out of the slumber of indifference, and agitated the most careless at least into inquiry. It broke up the torpor of the national mind, and by unsettling

its fixed ideas showed how unstable they really were.

Yet John did no wonderful works, and said nothing to attract or flatter anybody. He declared simply that The Christ was in truth at hand, and implored his hearers to believe in His Coming, and to prepare for it by confession of their sins, by repentance, and by baptism. Repentance means sorrow for sin *because it is sin*. Baptism was required as a sign and seal of repentance; and because in every case John demanded this pledge of his followers' sincerity, he has always been called *John the Baptist*.

His manner of administering baptism was very simple. Each person was led into the river, and then stooped down until the water washed quite over him: and after baptism, he was required simply to do his everyday duty, whatever that might be. I do not for a moment mean to imply that this requirement was easy, for duty is often a most difficult as well as a most holy thing to do. But I mean that no violent outward change was demanded. People were to go on doing what they had had to do before, only in a different spirit. The same things, but done rightly instead of wrongly. Thus, when a baptized soldier asked what he should do, John did not tell him to leave the army, but only to be gentle, and just, and contented with his pay; in short, to be simply a better soldier than he had been before. And in the same way he charged the tax-collectors to be strictly honest. But he urged all, without exception, to be *charitable*. *He that hath two coats*, said he, *let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise*.

The Baptist was a very humble man, and quite unconscious of his own greatness. As weeks passed by, larger and larger crowds thronged his steps, and hung upon his every utterance, but no popular

could tarnish the brightness of his humility. People wondered who he could possibly be. Some thought that he was Elijah come back to earth again, while others believed him to be the Messiah Himself. But when, after a time, he was urged to say who indeed he was, he declared that he was but a Voice, calling, long and loudly : *Prepare ye the way of the Lord !* He spoke of himself as only the humble messenger of One far mightier than he, the very thong of Whose sandal he was unworthy to loosen. *He it is*, he cried, *Who, coming after me, is preferred before me.*

I daresay you have not forgotten Jonathan, the son of Saul, king of Israel. There is a strong likeness, in some respects, between his character and the Baptist's. In both we see the same beautiful devotion, without reserve, to another,—the same glad willingness to lose that another might gain,—in short, the same *forgetfulness of self*. In my mind the two are always associated ; I mean that when I read of one I cannot help thinking of the other. Long after these early days of the Baptist's success, when shadows were lengthening about his path, and the eyes of men had wandered from him to his Great Master, he compared himself to a bridegroom's sympathizing friend. *He that hath the bride*, he said, *is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice : this, my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.* Now the Jews who heard John thus liken himself to a *bridegroom's friend* would understand a great deal more from that expression than you can, without explanation. Let me therefore show you how carefully and correctly the comparison was drawn. In those days, and in that country, when two people were going to be married, they saw scarcely anything of each other before their wedding. A third person—who was always an intimate friend of the bridegroom—arranged and managed everything

for them, carried messages from one to the other, and undertook all kinds of preparations. Thus, when the marriage, for which he had so long been preparing the way, actually took place, this friend was naturally very warmly interested in it. And yet his gladness was all for the sake of another, and not in any way for himself. He was no longer an important person, but while listening to the bridegroom's happy voice he was happy, in his secondary place.

When you are older, you will understand far better all that the great Baptist meant when he thus spoke "in a parable." His "joy was fulfilled" in standing aside, apparently forgotten, his day over, his power dwindling away. But I must not tell you here of that "decrease" to which he looked forward so bravely, and, as he looked, rejoiced. We shall meet him again. He *came*, says the Bible, *for a witness, to bear witness of the Light*. From the witness we must now turn, most reverently, towards the Light Himself.

Shall we not make one instant's pause, as if just to collect ourselves before entering a solemn Presence-chamber? Shall we not try to remember that He Whose earthly Life we are about to watch, that we may learn humbly to copy It, was God Himself, though veiled in human flesh? And shall not our gaze, however earnest, be therefore reverent?

CHAPTER III.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

I MUST take you a long way back now, even to the early part of the year in which John the Baptist was born. More than a hundred miles to the north of his parents' home, nestling among the green hills of Galilee, lay the quiet and beautiful village of Nazareth

Here, a few months before his birth, there was living a modest maiden, related to Elisabeth, and betrothed—that is, promised in marriage—to the village carpenter. The name of the carpenter was Joseph. Humble as his position was, he was of noble birth, being a direct descendant of King David. But in the low estate to which the Jewish people were now reduced, such claims counted for little or nothing, and Joseph lived the life of a simple artisan, on an equal and friendly footing with his fellow-villagers. The maiden who was betrothed to him also belonged to the royal tribe of Judah. But about her family we are told nothing: the Bible draws our attention to her as a single figure. She comes suddenly before us, ushered only by these simple words,—written, as it were, beneath her, like the title of a picture—the *virgin's name was Mary.*

To this lowly maiden came one day, straight from “the Presence of God,” the angel Gabriel. Standing before her, he greeted her in these gracious words: *Hail! thou that art highly favoured! the Lord is with thee! blessed art thou among women!* Then, while she trembled in natural bewilderment, he added soothingly: *Fear not, Mary! for thou hast found favour with God;* and forthwith poured into her ears the marvellous tidings that she, even she, was to become the mother of the Great Redeemer Himself. This unspeakable Mystery would be wrought by the Sovereign Power of the Holy Spirit. God, thus stooping, in the Person of His Blessed Son, to own a human mother, would *save His people from their sins*, and would make childhood sacred for evermore by His own gracious passage through it. *With God*, said Gabriel the angel,—and these were his parting words—*with God nothing shall be impossible.* Then Mary meekly answered: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word!*

Here let me remind you of the Garden of Eden.

Let us go back there together for one moment. It is evening; the heat is past; a breeze is stirring the leaves. There, in the heavy tree-shadows, are Adam and Eve, hiding from the Presence of God, seeking darkness rather than light, because their deeds had been evil. Ah, you remember it all now, do you not? How God called, in the hush of that solemn evening, and what He said, first to the wicked spirit,—then to Eve,—then to Adam? Before Eve, thenceforward, and the daughters of Eve, lay suffering and subjection. Yet, under the Foot of One to be born of woman the enemy of God would one day be trodden. But sin, like a venomous serpent, would pierce the Foot that trampled it, with a deadly wound. I am going to transplant a sentence from that early page in the First Part of these Bible Stories, which treats of all this, to the page which I am now writing: *In the course of time, a Saviour, the Son of God Himself, should be born into the world, having a human mother.* And now we can return to the maiden who has heard from an angel's lips that she was to be that mother. I wanted just to bring a connecting-thread from Eden to Nazareth, and to show you Eve's chastisement merged, mercifully and wonderfully, in Mary's honour.

After the departure of the angel, Mary's first impulse was to share her blessed secret with Elisabeth, of whose own anticipation her heavenly visitant had made her aware. So she started alone—and probably on foot, for she was poor—on her long journey southwards. No sooner did she reach the friendly roof of Zacharias than she was greeted by Elisabeth in the words of the angel: *Blessed art thou among women!* and again, *Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* This was the crowning surprise to the Virgin,—as Mary is called, to denote her maidenhood,—and, forgetting her weariness, she broke into a rapturous song of

thanksgiving. The devout tone and expressions of this beautiful psalm—which is chanted in the Evening Service of the English Church—show her to have been, as we should expect, a truly faithful servant of the Lord. After a visit of some length to Elisabeth, she returned home, while Joseph, whose interest in her was so close, was in due time prepared, by means of a dream, for the wonderful Event which was approaching.

Months went by, and then the quiet routine of village life at Nazareth was interrupted. The great Roman emperor who, as you have heard, was then the master of the world, being at rest from war, had had time to attend to the public business of his vast empire. And he wanted to find out how much money and how many soldiers his various subject provinces might be expected to yield him. So, as a first step, he decreed a “numbering” or “registration” of the people of each country. In Palestine this order was carried out in a very simple fashion. The members of every family, however scattered, repaired to their native place, and there registered their names. Joseph was thus bound to present himself at Bethlehem, “the city of David,” to enter his name on the family record, and Mary, who by this time had left her father’s house for her new home, went with him. It is probable that she rode upon one of the gentle asses commonly used in that country, and that Joseph walked by her side. Here, when we go from one place to another, we do not travel slowly from stage to stage, but spend as little time as possible on the road. But there, things are so different, even now. Time is of very little value to Orientals, and so they do not think of making plans to save it.

We read in St. Luke’s Gospel—that is, in the account of the Good Tidings of the New Testament which St. Luke wrote—that when the travellers reached Bethlehem, “there was no room for them

in the inn." Now an inn, according to our ideas, is a house where comforts of all kinds, besides mere lodging, can be had, and where there is a regular scale of charges for all that is supplied. But the place where Mary and Joseph halted, and found "no room," was not in the least like this. You must picture to yourselves, instead, a low, rough building, open to a courtyard round which it runs, so that its rooms are little more than a series of porches, and there is no such thing as privacy. This is an Eastern "khan," or inn, which is bare of all internal comfort, and offers merely the shelter of a roof and three walls. The courtyard keeps the camels and asses of travellers from straying, and sometimes, when the khan is built close to a cliff or hill, the cliff forms the fourth side of its square. In such cases, the large deep caverns in this limestone wall are often used as stables, or feeding-places for the cattle. It was probably in a roomy recess of this kind that Mary and Joseph were obliged to lodge, the actual building being crowded with country people like themselves. And here, when the Hour appointed in the Divine Counsels came, the Redeemer of the world was born.

Large flocks of sheep were generally kept at pasture on the sloping downs round Bethlehem. When the weather was mild enough, they remained out all night, and were then always watched by their "keepers." These shepherd-guards relieved each other regularly every three hours, from six o'clock in the evening till six in the morning. One night, one memorable night, while the Virgin was occupying the humble lodging which I have tried to describe to you, sheep were lying out on the uplands as usual, so the weather can hardly have been very wintry. Suddenly—but in which "watch" of the night we are not told—the starlight paled in a flood of glory which seemed to stream straight from the gates of heaven, while

"the angel of the Lord" appeared, and thus spoke to the startled shepherds: *Fear not: for, behold, I bring you Good Tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, Which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.* Then heavenly music swept down from beyond the stars, and, for a moment, a multitude of glorious beings were revealed, singing: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!* It was only for a moment. The mysterious melody died away, the splendid vision faded, and the shepherds were left alone with their sheep again, in the silent starlight. We do not read that any one else saw the dazzling sight, or heard the ringing song: marvellous as the story is, it is told in the Bible in the simplest possible manner, and entirely without remark. The first idea of the shepherds, when their bewilderment was over, was to go and see the wondrous Sight described by the angel. So they hurried up into the town, and easily made their way to the khan, guided, probably, by the lamp swinging above its entrance. Pressing across the crowded courtyard, they found themselves at once in the Presence of the Holy Babe and His mother. But their sheep were meanwhile left unprotected, so they stayed only to tell the story of all that had just happened on the downs, and then returned to their duty, *glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.* The tidings of the shepherds naturally filled all who heard them with astonishment, but to none could they have been so overpowering as to the Virgin herself. Yet no utterance of hers, at this time, is recorded. All that the Bible says is, that *Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*

Thus did God the Son, "in great humility," take

upon Him our human nature, with its sufferings but without its stains. *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Eight days after the Birth of the Holy Child, He was circumcised, and received, by Divine Command, the Name of all names to us most blessed: *JESUS*, that is, "Saviour." Thirty-two days later He was taken to Jerusalem, and there formally presented to God, while Mary made the necessary thankoffering, which, as she was poor, consisted only of a pair of turtle-doves. On this occasion the Infant Redeemer was recognized in the Temple by Simeon and Anna, two aged servants of the Lord, both of whom uttered devout thanksgivings for the privilege vouchsafed to them. Children who attend the afternoon service of the English Church must know the hymn of Simeon well; it opens in these familiar words: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word, for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation.* The Virgin now returned to Bethlehem, and shortly afterwards strangers of distinction, from a great distance, made their appearance, to do homage to the Holy Child. These "wise men from the East," as the Bible calls them, are generally supposed to have been Persian priests, skilled in *astrology*, that is, in studying the stars, and professing to foretell events according to their aspect. Astrology, which was mere guess-work, gave place long ago to the science of astronomy, but I cannot attempt to explain the difference between the two, in this little book. The Persians were aware that the Jews were on the watch for the Messiah, and these "wise men," accustomed to search the heavens for signs, had now perceived something there so remarkable that they at once undertook a journey to Jerusalem. No sooner had they arrived there than they inquired eagerly: *Where is He is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star*

the east, and are come to worship Him. Now Herod, the "deputy-king" of Judea, was old and infirm, and tortured, after all his iniquities, by a most uneasy conscience. When he heard that inquiry was being made about a *new-born King of the Jews*, his suspicions were at once aroused. He called priests and other learned men together, and questioned them anxiously as to the place where, according to prophecy, the Christ was to be born. They answered: *In Bethlehem of Judea.* Then the cunning king advised the pilgrims to hasten on to Bethlehem, and bade them be sure to come back and tell him if they succeeded in finding the Babe, that he too might go and worship Him. But what he really wanted was to get the Holy Child into his own power. The travellers, having learnt what they desired, set out for Bethlehem, *and, lo, says St. Matthew, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the Young Child was.* Opinions have always been divided as to what this "star" was. Some have supposed that it was a comet, and others that it was a "temporary star," that is, one which appeared for a time, and then vanished. It is evident, at all events, that it was distinct and brilliant enough to serve as a guide to these professed star-gazers. The humble khan at Bethlehem was soon found, and the pilgrims fell down to adore the Infant Messiah, presenting an offering of gold and rich spices which they had brought with them. But they did not go back to Jerusalem. Warned by a dream as they had been counselled by a star, they went home by another road, and thus Herod's crafty plan was baffled. But he was not the less determined to secure the destruction, if possible, of the Infant Who seemed, in his already jealous eyes, a Rival. He gave orders that all the children in Bethlehem, under two years old, should be murdered. This new crime, whimsical as it must have appeared to the people, who knew no reason for it, probably created no great surprise, for they were

accustomed to Herod's barbarities. From the poor, broken-hearted mothers, indeed, there rose to heaven a piteous wail of anguish ; but they were quite helpless.

The cruel tyrant's second plan failed like the first, for Joseph, warned in a dream of the coming danger, had removed the Holy Child and His mother in time. They all retreated into Egypt, and there remained until Herod was dead, when Joseph was directed to return to the Holy Land. He obeyed, and his steps were Divinely guided back to his old Galilean home. There, at Nazareth, where His Childhood and Youth were to be spent, the Blessed Saviour disappears from our sight, into the humble dwelling of the carpenter. St. Luke says of Him, as of the Baptist at His age, that *the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit*, adding that He was *filled with wisdom : and the Grace of God was upon Him*. But beyond this, Scripture is silent about the earlier, and larger part, by far, of His earthly Life. We may imagine, and suppose, and infer, but we do not *know* any of Its details. For my part, I think that where the Bible is pointedly silent, we should be reverently content to wait. I do not doubt that, one day, all that we now long to know will be known.

The veil that hides the Blessed Young Life from us, however, parts for a moment over Its thirteenth year. But of this single break in the long silence I must tell you in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

AT twelve years old a Jewish lad ceased to be considered a child. He was then held responsible for various religious duties hitherto discharged for him by his father. He became also more independent—more

free, I mean, to go where he pleased—than an English boy of the same age. When the Divine Son of Mary, therefore, had passed His twelfth year, He accompanied her, for the first time, on her annual journey with Joseph to Jerusalem, for the Feast of the Passover.

On the occasion of this great Festival, the Holy City was always in what we call "gala dress," that is, it was decorated with green boughs, flowers, fruit-blossom, and flags. As soon as the distant outline of its buildings became visible to approaching pilgrims, each company halted, and made careful preparations for an orderly and effective entrance. The offerings were grouped to the best advantage, lilies and roses being gaily scattered over the golden corn and other "first-fruits," while the horns of the oxen intended for peace-offerings were wreathed with olive-leaves, and often gilded. Then, with flutes playing and banners waving, the procession again advanced, all eyes being turned to the distant burnished pinnacles of the Temple, which, smitten by the sunlight, seemed to flash a welcome.

But when the Feast was over, and multitudes of departing pilgrims poured out of the city gates, all was confusion instead of order. For some little way from Jerusalem, before detachments of the travellers turned right and left towards their various homes, the crowd was necessarily immense, and the road often completely blocked. The start, too, was generally made at night, by the fitful and flickering light of torches, in order to avoid the heat of the sun. Thus families easily became separated, and any search for a missing person in the moving mass of people, and camels, and asses was likely to be hopeless. I think you will now clearly understand the passage from St. Luke's Gospel which I am going to copy for you: *And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child JESUS tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they,*

supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. For some time they searched in vain, but at last they discovered Him, in one of the Temple courts. Here classes, open to all comers, were held by the *rabbis*, or learned teachers of the law, who were regarded by the people with great veneration. The scholars sat grouped upon the pavement of tinted marbles, round a high seat from which the presiding rabbi delivered his lecture. In the midst of one of these studious circles the Virgin found Him Whom she sought, listening to the teaching of several rabbis who were in attendance, and now and then asking them questions, while all present were amazed at the depth and strength of His understanding. *Son*, said Mary, worn doubtless with her anxious search, *Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us?* And He, turning to her with a simple dignity, which, in One so young, must have been most striking, replied: *How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?* These are the first recorded Words of the Blessed Saviour. And even she who had cherished Him from His Infancy did not understand them. Nevertheless, she "kept" them, as she had kept the story of the Bethlehem shepherds, "in her heart." And now, despite the age of comparative independence which He had reached, the Lord went home with her, and submitted with a sweet humility, to her will. To every rule of the carpenter's simple household He was "subject."

Nazareth was a much larger place then than it is now, but the house in which Joseph lived was probably very like the houses that are to be seen there at the present day. I think you may safely picture it to yourselves as a low, white dwelling, with a flat roof on which a vine crept, and doves cooed and basked in

the sunshine. Furniture, such as we think necessary, is hardly known to the inmates of such a house. Instead of beds, a wide fixed bench—which runs round the “living-room,” and serves as a shelf in the daytime—is spread at night with gaily-coloured quilts. Instead of chairs, mats lie here and there upon the floor. On these the members of the family sit at meals, round a low stand which bears the tray of rice and meat, stewed fruit, or other simple food. In one corner stands a painted wooden chest, holding the books and clothes of the household, while in the open doorway—which admits more light and air than the small window—are several large earthenware jars of water, their mouths filled with bunches of green leaves to keep the contents cool.

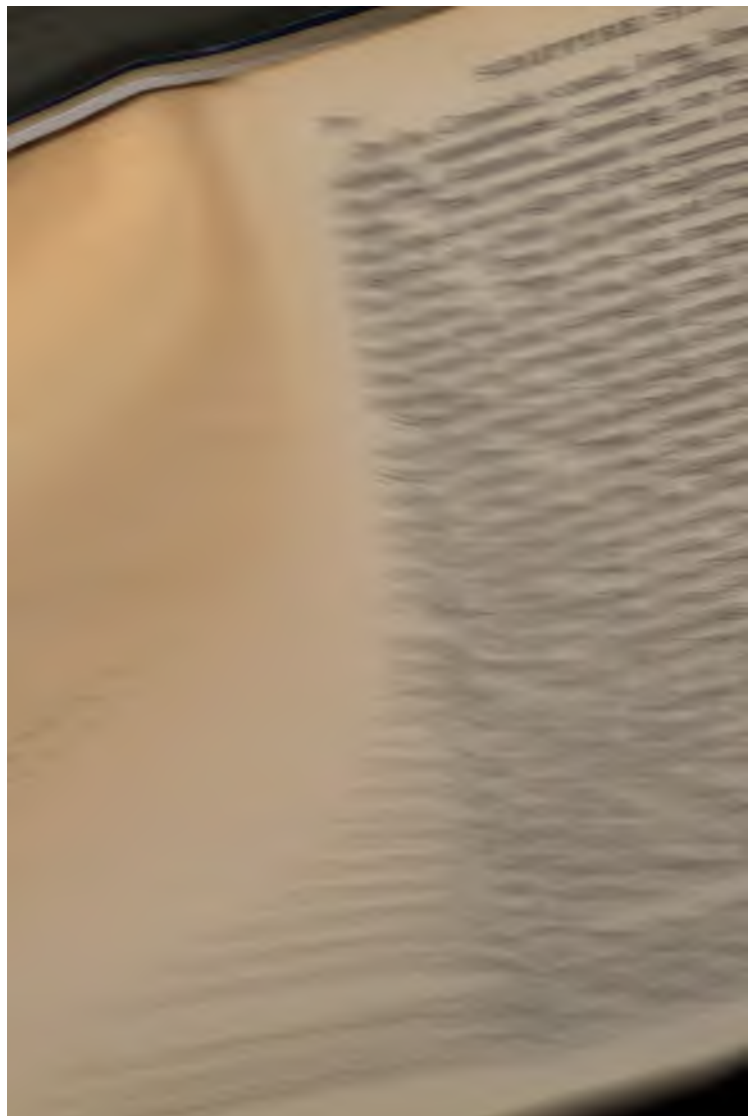
Something like this we may fairly conclude the interior of the carpenter’s cottage to have been. The workshop was probably a separate building, more humble still, and close at hand.

As the Figure of the Youthful Saviour again disappears within this lowly home, a wondrous lesson of gentle obedience seems written for all children above the leafy doorway, in the good old words you know so well: *Honour thy father and thy mother!*

St. Luke merely repeats, as his narrative turns away again from the Nazareth home, that its Divine Inmate *increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*

About the next seventeen or eighteen years I can tell you nothing. At their end we find ourselves again where our second chapter took us, with the earnest, busy Baptist on the banks of the Jordan. There is good reason for believing that John had never seen Him Whose immediate Coming he so eagerly proclaimed. But one day, among many other candidates for baptism, there came One before Whom he at once drew back. *I have need,* he exclaimed, *to be baptized of Thee; and comest Thou to me?*

Something in the Stranger's Look or Bearing, perhaps—for we read of no spoken Word—told him that this indeed was He for Whom he was unworthy to perform even the most trifling service. But the Lord answered—and this is His second recorded Utterance : *Suffer it to be so now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.* Then John yielded, and the Blessed One, in Whose pure Eyes the very heavens were not clean, bowed beneath the baptismal waters. And *it came to pass*, writes St. Luke, *that JESUS also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a Voice came from heaven, Which said, Thou art my Beloved Son ; in Thee I am well pleased.* Thus solemnly did the Lord step forward into public life. The Nazareth home was to be home no longer. The hour had come for which all the quiet years spent beneath its roof had been but the preparation. He Who had hitherto been known only as a retiring Galilean peasant, was about to put forth claims which must draw upon Him the attention, the criticism, and the verdict of the world. The peace of obscurity lay behind Him ; in front, work and warfare stretched—all the way—to the End. In warfare, with that “enemy of God” whose head He had come to bruise, He engaged, immediately after His Baptism, in the desert. *And He was there*, St. Mark tells us, *in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan ; and was with the wild beasts.* *And in those days*, adds St. Luke, *He did eat nothing : and when they were ended, He afterward hungered.* You will read all the details of this mysterious Temptation of the Lord when you are older. The spirit of darkness—whether visibly or invisibly I cannot tell—strove with all his might to throw a shadow over the Blessed “Light of the world.” He expended all his cunning in the vain hope of enticing the Holy One to a single downward step, ‘one moment of failing trust.



once followed the Saviour. Hearing their footsteps, He turned round and said: *What seek ye?* They answered, *Master, where dwellest Thou?* Then, with gentle courtesy, He invited them to *come and see*, and they gladly accompanied Him to the place where He was lodging. This was probably one of the slight structures of twisted boughs which served to shelter people temporarily encamped by the water-side. It was late in the afternoon, and the guests lingered far into the night. The Presence and the Words of One Who "spake as never man spake" held them spell-bound, and from that night forward they were His devoted disciples. One of them was Andrew, a fisherman from the lake of Gennesaret. The other is supposed to have been John, called the Evangelist, to distinguish him from the Baptist. Andrew's first thought was to communicate his happiness. He told his brother, Simon, that he had found the Messiah, and brought him also to the Lord, Who received him with these words: *Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas*, that is, *Peter*, or "a stone."

The following day these three disciples accompanied their Master on His journey northwards towards Galilee. On the way they met another fisherman, named Philip, and to him the Lord JESUS said: *Follow Me*.—I may write, and you may read, these two simple Words,—but the Gentle Voice, and the Winning Manner in which they were uttered—ah! I cannot describe Those. We cannot even conceive that Sweet Persuasiveness which made such Invitations irresistible.

No one knows what the Blessed Lord's outward Appearance was. On this point, as on many others, Scripture is impressively silent. But we may be quite sure that the Beauty of Holiness shone in every Line and Feature of the Divine Face. It seems to us that those who followed Him were first fascinated by something indescribable in His Personality, and then, as

His Character disclosed Itself, drawn to love Him with a love which soon kindled into rapturous devotion.

Philip "followed" unhesitatingly, and—like Andrew—he sought at once to draw another as he had himself been drawn. He had a friend called Nathanael, whom he begged to come and see *Him, of Whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write, JESUS of Nazareth.* Nathanael came, though slow to believe that any greatness could arise from so obscure a spot as Nazareth, and was soon convinced of the truth of Philip's words. *Rabbi*, before long he cried, *Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.*

Followed now by five disciples, the Blessed Redeemer pursued His journey, and reached Nathanael's native town, Cana, in Galilee, just as a marriage was about to take place, at which the Virgin had come from Nazareth to be present. The Lord also was invited, with His followers, and He accepted the invitation. The marriage festivities lasted for several days, and as they were drawing to a close the Virgin—probably an intimate friend of the entertainers—perceived that the supply of wine was falling short, perhaps because allowance had not been made for unexpected guests. Her kind heart prompted her to spare her friends, if possible, the mortification of this discovery, for any limit to their hospitality would have been regarded by them as a disgrace. In her anxiety she turned naturally to her Divine Son, and told Him of the unfortunate circumstance. *Woman*, He replied,—in the language He spoke this was both a tender and respectful form of address,—*Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.* Thus gently did He teach her that in His changed and public position their mutual relations must be modified, yet not the less did He act—but acted immediately—on her information. Six large earthenware jars stood near, all empty. The Lord bade the attendants fill

them with water. This was done. Then He desired them to "draw out" for the guests from the jars they had just filled. Again He was obeyed, and instead of water, wine flowed into the pitchers. And so excellent was this wine that the president of the feast, who knew nothing of its origin, observed to the bridegroom that he had kept the best for the last. *This beginning of miracles, says the Bible, did JESUS in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His Glory.* By a "miracle" we mean a wonder worked by the exercise of *supernatural* power. *Supernatural* means *above nature*, and a miracle, therefore cannot be accounted for by what we call "natural laws." "Nature," however, is only another name for the Works of God, and we call the mighty principles on which these Works seem to be regulated *laws*, because they are so orderly and so constant. Yet "nature's laws"—a good man once said—"are only God's Customs." To suspend them must be as easy to Him as to make them, while to us—with our limited powers of understanding—the making and the suspending are alike incomprehensible. But I wish to point out to you that the Blessed Son of God did not use His "supernatural" Power for His Own benefit, but for the Glory of the Father, and the good of others. It was in Kindness that—in changing the water into wine—He first exercised it. And afterwards He employed it freely as *He went about, doing good*, helping, comforting, healing, blessing, everywhere. But over "the forces of nature," as we call the winds, the clouds, the tides, He asserted His Sovereignty but rarely, and then only for the sake of others. *He hated the devils and diseases—it has been finely said—as He hated the sins of men, esteeming them as the work of Satan, and not as the Work of His Father. But the course and appointed order of the world He esteemed as the Vesture of God, whereof He would not disturb one single fold.*

CHAPTER V.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

THESE words close the last of the New Testament's Four Memoirs of the Divine Life: *And there are also many other Things Which JESUS did, the Which, if They should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.* So you see that, after all, we possess only a fragment of that Blessed Life. Ample as the Revelation is for its purpose, it is well to bear in mind that—even with regard to the short Public Ministry of the Blessed Lord—what is reserved is far more than what is revealed. It is as though, from a spacious and beauteous garden, a few handfuls of flowers were gathered and presented as a specimen—if I may so speak—of the profusion left ungathered. But, in this very small book, of course I can only take single flowers, as it were, from what the Evangelists offer, and where all are beautiful, choice is a great difficulty. The group of incidents out of which I shall take a few in this chapter, occurred after the First Miracle and before the Call of the Twelve Apostles. During this period the Lord JESUS visited Jerusalem twice, Samaria once, Nazareth once, and Capernaum several times, besides pausing on the banks of the Jordan, and travelling from place to place in Galilee. Except at Capernaum, where the house of Simon Peter, the brother of Andrew, was open to Him, His was a wandering Life, which to us, with our settled habits, seems very comfortless. He said of Himself, indeed, at a later time, that though foxes had holes, and birds of the air had nests, the Son of man had not *where to lay His Head*.

While speaking of His mode of life, I may venture, think, to give you some idea of the dress which it

is probable that the Holy One wore ; namely, a blue upper robe, falling loosely over a long under-garment of white, or pale grey, striped with crimson. A covering of folded linen would protect the Head from the sun, and the Feet would be shod with the customary sandals. This was the usual dress of a "rabbi," or teacher, and that is why it is thought that the Blessed Lord wore it. For He adopted more than one habit of the rabbis : He travelled from place to place, teaching, for instance, as they did ; and He generally sat down while He taught, as they also did. And—quite apart from His Divine claims—He was soon eyed suspiciously by them for the very reason that He—an unlettered Galilean peasant, *as they supposed*—suddenly usurped their peculiar functions, and "taught the people," though not indeed as *they* taught them. They were learned slaves to "the letter of the law," but of that *newness of spirit* which was the burden of His Teaching they knew nothing.

The courts of the Temple were sadly profaned in those careless days. A kind of market was held in them, chiefly for the sale of animals used in sacrifice, and there were also stalls where all sorts of money could be exchanged for the sacred shekel, which was the only coin acknowledged within the Temple boundaries. While in Jerusalem for the first Passover after His Baptism, the Redeemer cleared these sacred courts of all that defiled them. *Make not My Father's House, He cried, an house of merchandise !* And though everybody must have been greatly astonished, no one interfered with Him. This may have been because of the "many mighty works" which He had already done in the Holy City. It was after this visit to Jerusalem that He stayed on the banks of the Jordan, while His disciples were baptizing, and that a complaint was made to John the Baptist, who was not far off, that every day more followed his Master, while fewer followed him. And then it was that John spoke of

himself as the happy *friend of the Bridegroom*. Very shortly afterwards, the noble Baptist was shut up by Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee and Perea, in a dreary castle called Machærus, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea. Herod Antipas was one of the sons of that wicked Herod who had been king of Judea. He was married to a daughter of the king of Arabia, but he treated her shamefully, being determined to marry one Herodias, who was already the wife of his half-brother. This made the Arabian king very angry for his daughter's sake, and Herod was on his way to meet him in battle, when John the Baptist crossed his path, and boldly rebuked him, saying: *It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife*. It was for this offence that he flung John into that dismal fortress, and although the imprisonment lasted only about a year, it yet was life-long. Herod might have relented in time, for he respected his prisoner in his heart. But Herodias never forgave the reproof; she only waited and watched for a chance of revenge. Time passed, and when Herod's birthday came, a grand banquet was given, and Salome, the daughter of Herodias, appeared, and danced gracefully before the guests. She was greeted with loud applause, and Herod, quite carried away by the excitement of the moment, declared that he would give her anything, without exception, for which she might choose to ask. Salome consulted her mother, and the wicked Herodias told her to demand *the head of John the Baptist*. In vain Herod regretted his rash oath; he could not recall it, and, without an hour's notice, the noble *friend of the Bridegroom* was beheaded in his dungeon by a soldier of the guard. His head was carried by Salome to her savage mother, while his body was taken away, and reverently buried, by his mourning disciples.

But I said that I would show you a likeness between the Baptist and Elijah the prophet, in something

besides their appearance and habits. Once, you recollect, Elijah threw himself down, depressed and disheartened, under a shrub in the wilderness, and prayed that his life might end, because it seemed to him to have fallen short of its mark. In the Baptist's life there was a short passage very like this. Once, during his weary imprisonment, his heart failed him, too. His nervous system was weakened. After his free life in the open air he was cramped in a prison. His work was cut short, and what he had once grasped as real seemed to be slipping away from him like a dream. From his cell he heard of the mighty Works of his Master, yet he was not released. His preaching had been like the trumpet-blast that commands attention before a king passes by. And now that the King, with all His Power, was passing by, could it be that he who had proclaimed Him was forgotten? In this way his mind preyed upon itself, and at last he could bear it no longer. He sent messengers to the Lord, to re-assure himself. *Art thou He that should come?* he bade them say, *or look we for Another?* And in that same hour, St. Luke tells us, the Holy One cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight. Then, turning to the messengers, He said: *Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended—or disappointed—in Me.*

In days to come you will find the names of Elijah and the Baptist blended, in the Bible, in another way, which at present you would not understand, and you will notice also the cordial words of honour in which the Blessed Redeemer repeatedly spoke of John. But now I must turn back to the time when this great man was first imprisoned, when the Lord left the riverside, and passed through Samaria on H

way to Galilee. It has seemed better on the whole to finish the story of the Baptist here, though the end of it does not properly belong to this period. The history of what happened, one hot noonday, by the side of Jacob's well, during the Saviour's journey through Samaria, is one of the many passages in the New Testament which cannot be shortened without being spoilt, so we will put that aside among your *treats in store*. On reaching Cana again, the Holy One was petitioned by a nobleman, — probably one of those attached to the household of Herod Antipas—to go at once to Capernaum, and heal his son, who lay there dangerously ill. *Sir ! come down*, he implored, *ere my child die !* But the Great Healer did not go. He spoke instead of going. *Go thy way !* He said, *thy son liveth*. And the nobleman, who had heard of His miracles in Jerusalem, believed Him. He set out for home without delay, and the next morning servants of his own met him on the road. They were coming to tell him that his son had recovered. At the very hour when the Blessed Lord had said, at Cana, *thy son liveth !* the fever, at Capernaum, had left the invalid, and that not gradually, but suddenly.

Shortly after this, the Saviour again visited Jerusalem. While there, He took pity, one Sabbath-day, on a poor man who had been a helpless cripple for more than thirty-eight years, and gave him power—simply by His spoken Word—to get up, and carry the pallet on which he had so long been stretched. This miracle made the Jewish authorities very angry, and, though His Deed had been one of purest charity, the Lord was publicly accused of Sabbath-breaking. But when, instead of defending Himself, He calmly asserted His Divinity, the fury of His hearers knew no bounds, and from that day conspiracies against His Life were set on foot. *The Jews*, says St. John, *sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath,*

but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Rejected thus with angry disdain in Jerusalem, the Son of man now repaired to Nazareth, the home of His Childhood. Perhaps you are expecting to hear that there, at least, He was affectionately and reverentially received. But no. At Nazareth also, as soon as He declared Himself in the synagogue to be the Messiah, and the mercy of God to be universal, He was rejected, and with violence. The people laid rude hands on Him, and dragged Him to the edge of the hill above the town, intending to cast Him down headlong. But—until the appointed Hour—human rage was powerless against Him. Freeing Himself easily from the grasp of His foes, He passed *through the midst of them*, and turned away from the familiar spot. How bitterly the Holy One must have felt that turning away, no children could ever imagine. Even those grown-up people who have gone back, after years of absence, to the old place that was “home” in childhood, and have felt that the changes—though made by death, and not unkindness—were more than they could bear,—even these, I say, can only conceive in the very faintest degree the pain of that Going Away from Nazareth.

And now the Rejected Redeemer turned to Capernaum, a busy town lying at the north-west corner of the Lake of Gennesaret or Tiberias, which is also called in the Bible “the sea of Galilee.” Here were many boatmen and fishermen, for the best and quickest communication with many places was by boat. It was in Capernaum, you know, that the nobleman’s son was miraculously cured when the Lord was last at Cana, so that when the Divine Healer appeared in the town, He was soon the Centre of a crowd. Two fishing-boats were lying on the beach, close to the water’s edge. One belonged to Simon Peter and his brother Andrew, and the other to Zebedee, the father of John the Evangelist. The fishermen had come back af

a profitless night's fishing, and were busy mending their nets. The Lord, pressed by the thronging people, stepped into Peter's boat, and asked him to push off a little—perhaps an oar's length—from the shore. Then, sitting down, He spoke earnestly to the crowd on the beach, and when His address was over, He turned graciously to Peter, as if to acknowledge the loan of the boat, and said : *Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.* And Peter replied : *Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing ; nevertheless, at Thy Word I will let down the net.* So the boat was turned, and the net was dropped, and immediately a rush of fish filled it so heavily that its meshes began to give way, and Peter and Andrew could not haul it in alone. So they signalled to John and his brother James, and between them all it was drawn up at last, and both boats were overladen with the fish. Now Peter was what we call a *demonstrative* person, that is, one who has warm feelings, and quickly and easily expresses them. A keen sense of his own unworthiness to be even near so holy and powerful a Being as the Lord JESUS rushed over him now. He fell on his knees before Him, exclaiming : *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord !* But the Blessed One kindly bade him *fear not*, and desired all the four to follow Him, that He might make them *fishers of men*. And straightway, St. Mark writes, *they forsook their nets, and followed Him*, that is, they gave up their other occupations, and became His regular attendants as well as His disciples.

Capernaum, though very picturesque, was not a healthy place. Its situation was very low and marshy, and fever was of common occurrence. The following Sabbath, the mother of Peter's wife was suddenly struck down with this complaint while the Lord JESUS was teaching in the synagogue. When He returned, after casting an evil spirit out of an afflicted

man during the service, the anxious household laid their trouble before Him, and not, you may be sure, in vain. The Great Sympathizer went straight to the bedside, took the sufferer by the hand, raised her up, and *rebuked the fever*. We have the testimony of St. Luke, who was a physician, that it was a "great," or violent attack, but instantly, as in the case of the nobleman's son, the fever *departed*, and the patient found herself able at once to prepare the mid-day meal for the family. The news was soon known, and at sunset—the Sabbath being then ended, and burden-bearing again allowable—Peter's dwelling was surrounded by sick and helpless people. All who had suffering friends brought them, and the crowd was so large that St. Mark says expressively: *all the city was gathered together at the door*. But the Divine Reliever was never weary. *He laid His Hands*, St. Luke assures us, *on every one of them, and healed them*. What an evening that must have been in Capernaum! Think of all the dark homes brightened, the heavy burdens lifted, the sorrowful hearts cheered! But even when all the people were gone home happy, He who had made them happy did not rest long after His fatigue. *Rising up a great while before day*, He withdrew for prayer to the solitude of a mountain near. Nor did He return immediately to Capernaum, but moved from village to village, *preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people*. One day a poor leper came to Him, and kneeling down before Him, said: *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean*. Now I have told you before, in the story of Job, what a dreadful disease leprosy was. The law of Moses laid down many rules about it, one of which was that a person afflicted with it was continually to cry, wherever he went, *Unclean! Unclean!* so that people might keep away from him. And to *touch* a leper was forbidden as a defilement. But the Son of God did not shrink from this pr

outcast. He *touchèd* him, for to Him defilement was impossible, and said gently, *I will ! Be thou clean !* And the leper was a leper no more.

Not long after this, when the Blessed Saviour was again in Capernaum, four men carried a paralyzed cripple, on a litter, to the house where He was teaching. But the crowd about the door was very great, so, as they would not be daunted, they ascended the outside steps, with their burden, to the flat roof, and having made an opening in the sods that covered the rafters, they lowered the stretcher into the room where the Lord was. And *when JESUS saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy: Son, thy sins be forgiven thee !* Then, while murmurs arose from some who were there, He added: *I say unto thee, arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house !* And immediately the man arose, cured, and departed, carrying his litter as he had been commanded.

I must not omit to say that another disciple was "called" about this time. You shall hear about it in his own words, for he was none other than Matthew the Evangelist. He says: *as JESUS passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom ; and He said unto him, Follow Me ! And he arose, and followed Him.* Matthew belonged to a despised and hated class. He was a "publican," or provincial tax-gatherer, and moreover a *Jewish* collector of the Roman taxes. The Blessed Lord, however, heeded no such distinctions ; He chose a person for his own sake, and without regard to his station or his employment. It is worthy of note that of the four lists of the Twelve Apostles which are given to us, only one mentions Matthew as "the publican." And that one is Matthew's own !

I must only tell you further, in this chapter, that on the following Sabbath day the Lord JESUS publicly

healed a man, in the Capernaum synagogue, whose hand was withered and powerless. The unbelieving rabbis, and others, who were present, were so angry that St. Mark speaks of them as *filled with madness*. In their hatred of Him Whose Life put their lives to shame, they forgot weaker hatreds, and consulted even the Herodians—or supporters of the Roman Government—whom they usually called their enemies, as to the surest way of bringing about His death.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

IMMEDIATELY after recording the cure of the man with the withered hand, St. Luke tells us that the Blessed Lord *went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles,—Simon [whom He also named Peter], and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James,—and Judas Iscariot.* The first seven of these twelve names you know already. Those who bore them had been called to discipleship before, some by the actual Voice of the Blessed One, and some by that wondrous Personal Charm which constrained so many to follow where It led. And Peter, Andrew, and John had been “called” a second time, you remember, after the miracle in Peter’s boat. But this deliberate Choice of the Twelve, out of many, was quite different from any previous summons. It was the establishment of a Society. Those who were “called” were henceforward associated in new and peculiar relations to one another; they were the formally enrolled members of a Body which owned the Lord Hims

as its Head. And it was also the first step towards a regular method of spreading, far and wide, the Blessed Teachings of the Saviour. But the moment of the dispersion of the Apostles for this last purpose, as the *messengers* or *representatives* of their Master, had not yet come. Immediately after their appointment, the Redeemer came down with them to the lower slopes of the hill, and there—seated upon the turf, or some projecting slab of rock—He poured forth to the people who had been gradually collecting, that beautiful address commonly called “The Sermon on the Mount.” It is quite impossible to tell you, in this little book, about the Discourses and “Parables”—or pictorial lessons—of the Lord. But even if I had plenty of space, I never could do them justice. For to *paraphrase* them—that is, to put them into other words,—seems to me to destroy both their beauty and their force. And they cannot be shortened without grievous loss. But they will all speak to you for themselves some day. Meanwhile, I will only say, of the Sermon on the Mount, that in the course of its delivery that Pattern Prayer occurred, which you all know so well. *One of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples!—And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name! Thy Kingdom come! Thy Will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.* Now you see why we call this “the Lord’s Prayer.”

His earnest Discourse ended, the Saviour returned to Capernaum, and presently met a group of “elders of the synagogue,” who came with an urgent petition on behalf of the Roman officer then in command of the garrison. He was a pagan indeed, and they were Jews, but he had behaved well to the people of

Capernaum, and had earned their attachment and their gratitude by building them a synagogue. He must have been a kindly man, for his present distress was entirely on account of the illness of a slave, and in those days slaves were generally treated with even less care than dumb animals. His messengers now entreated the Lord to heal this slave, and the Blessed One, always willing, immediately turned His Steps towards the "centurion's" quarters. But on the way He was stopped by this message from the centurion himself: *Lord, trouble not Thyself! for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a Word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go! and he goeth; and to another, Come! and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this! and he doeth it.* These words showed the conviction of the heathen centurion that the Lord's control over disease was as complete as his own control over his soldiers, and that nothing more than the Word of Command was necessary. Turning "to the people that followed Him," the Lord JESUS exclaimed: *I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel!—And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.* So the faithful centurion, watching by his slave's bedside at home, saw—before there was time to hear—that his prayer was granted!

About twenty-five miles south-west of Capernaum, there lay, among the quiet hills, a village called *Nain*, which means "the lovely." The day after the wonderful cure of the centurion's slave, the Lord, having left Capernaum again, was approaching this picturesque place, attended as usual, by a great many people besides those who avowed themselves His disciples. For bitterly though many of

the Pharisees and the professed teachers of the law hated Him, He had won the hearts of the "common" people, and, go where He would, He moved in a crowd. Thus, then, the Centre of an ever-gathering throng, He was ascending the winding road that led up to Nain, when His Ear was caught by the melancholy wail of flutes, breathing a dirge—or death-song—above. And presently a mournful procession passed out of the gate of the town, and began to move slowly down the hill. It was a funeral. And the saddest of funerals. Lifeless, upon the open bier, lay stretched a young man, *the only son of his mother, and she was a widow*. One mourner followed, bowed down with woe,—she whose pride, and joy, and prop, he had been. And behind her came many sympathizers, their kind hearts aching for her in her desolation. But they could not lift—nor even help to bear—her burden of grief.

The Blessed Lord looked, and it was enough. He *had compassion on her*, for He knew—and He knows now—all that a bereaved mother feels. His first Word was to her. *Weep not!* He said gently, in that Voice of comfort which we so often crave to hear,—*Weep not*. And then He laid His Hand upon the bier, and the bearers stopped. Think what a thrill must have run through the suddenly silenced throng! *Young man!*—it was the Lord Who spoke, and to the dead—*young man, I say unto thee, Arise!* And then another voice, startling to all, broke the stillness, for *he that was dead sat up, and began to speak; and He delivered him to his mother*. We know—who have watched, with a hopeless yearning, by our own beloved dead—that words are all too poor to tell of that mother's overpowering joy. Even the Evangelist attempts not to say more of *her*, but turns to the bystanders, on whom, we read, *there came a fear, and they glorified God, saying, That a Great Prophet is risen up among us, and That God hath visited*

His people. And this rumour of Him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

Thus did the Son of God pass through human life, everywhere uttering Words of pity and stretching out Hands of mercy. To suffer was to have a claim upon His boundless Lovingkindness. A great Danish sculptor has modelled a draped statue, representing the Divine Figure, which to me seems more beautiful and more appealing than any picture I ever saw. The attitude is true to the testimony of the Bible; the bearing is the bearing of a King, yet the Arms are stretched forward beseechingly. Below, on the pedestal which supports the Figure, are engraven three German words: *Komme zu Mir! Come unto Me!* With them that great Invitation opens, which has fallen like music on weary hearts ever since it was first given:—*Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*

Let me tell you here of one response, at least, to this blessed Invitation.

Not very long after His Visit to Nain, the Lord was one day the Guest of a Pharisee named Simon. In many of the towns of Palestine, the foreign habit of reclining during meals had displaced the ancient Jewish custom of sitting on mats spread upon the floor. Where this practice was adopted, cushioned benches or couches ran round three sides of the table, and on these the guests reposed, half lying, half sitting, each person resting on his left arm, his knees being partly drawn up, so that the soles of the feet were turned outwards, away from the table. Family life was far more public there than it is with us. It was usual for other people besides ir guests to come in and out during an entertain

to look on, and sometimes to join in the conversation. But women rarely appeared on such occasions, so that Simon was much surprised to observe a woman among the strangers who were passing in through his open door. And, when he looked again, his surprise deepened into displeasure. For he recognized in the woman one who bore a bad character in the place. She had forfeited the respect of her neighbours by her misconduct, and was despised by everybody as an outcast. Nevertheless, she had ventured into the house of the proud Pharisee, braving his cold looks, and the likelihood of being turned out, because she was *grieved and wearied with the burden of her sins*, and she had heard that He Who could forgive sin was there. She crept humbly behind the Saviour, forgetting everything except her own shame and penitence, and presently, crouching down, she bent her head over the Sacred Feet until they were bathed in her streaming tears. Then she wiped them with her long hair, and kissed them reverently, pouring over them costly perfumes which she had brought expressly. She was behind Him, and she spoke not a word, yet He knew her story, and He read her heart. Nor did the angry and disdainful feelings of His host escape Him, for *He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man*.—Simon, He said, *I have somewhat to say unto thee*. And the Pharisee answered, *Master, say on!* Then, in the guise of a “parable,” the Lord pointed out to him in the woman he spurned, a sorrow for sin, and a love for the Saviour from sin, to which he, blinded by his self-righteousness, was an utter stranger. *Wherefore*, He concluded, *I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*. Then, turning round, He spoke for the first time to the penitent herself. *Thy sins are forgiven*, He said, *thy faith hath saved*

thee. Go in peace! Thus did the "heavy-laden" indeed "find rest unto her soul."

We must pass on now to a very different scene in the Life of the Lord. *Now it came to pass on a certain day, says St. Luke, that He went into a ship with His disciples: and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed He fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.*

The Sea of Gennesaret, which lies six hundred feet below the sea-level, is subject to sudden furious squalls, or hurricanes. The wind sweeps down through the clefts in the hills without any warning, and in a moment lashes the waters of the imprisoned lake into frenzy. The danger to an open fishing boat is then very great, for the tossing waves easily rush over her from stem to stern. But through the uproar of the storm the Blessed Lord slept quietly on, His Head resting on the rough leather cushion belonging to the seat near the rudder. It was neither by the wind nor the water, but by His Apostles, that He was at last disturbed. Deserted by their courage, and forgetting Whose Presence guarded the boat, they aroused Him, crying, half reproachfully: *Master! carest Thou not that we perish?* Then He rose, and "rebuked" the wind, as He had rebuked fevers and evil spirits, *and said unto the sea, Peace! Be—or keep—still!* Instantly there was silence. The rolling waves raved no longer. The howling wind died into stillness. No more driving hailstones beat upon the quivering boat. Then, in the strange and solemn hush, the Blessed One turned to His cowering Apostles,—*Why are ye so fearful?* he said, sadly; *how is it that ye have no faith?* And although they ad awoke Him in the expectation that He would ve them,—and although they had had proofs without nber of His superhuman Power,—they were now

lost in astonishment, and glancing at one another, they whispered among themselves: *What manner of Man is this? for He commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey Him!*

CHAPTER VII.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

WE cannot follow the Blessed Footsteps on "the other side of the lake," for I am obliged, as I have already said, to pass over far more than I am able to relate. But I must tell you of an occurrence in Capernaum, after the Lord JESUS came back, which concerned a little girl of twelve years old. The chief ruler of the synagogue, whose name was Jairus, came to the Saviour, and fell at His Feet with a piteous tale. *My little daughter*, he said, *lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy Hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.* Then the Lord went with him, *and much people followed Him, and thronged Him.*

In this crowd there was a poor woman who had been an invalid for twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors, but they had done her no good. Indeed, instead of getting better, she had grown steadily worse, so that hers was a very sad case; but when she heard about Him Whose Life seemed spent in healing sufferers, a gleam of hope shot into her heart. So strong was her belief in Him that she felt persuaded the mere touch of His clothing would cure her. So she watched for an opportunity, and in the crowd that now surrounded Him she found it. She crept in and out, among the people, until she came within reach of the Holy One, and then she stretched out her hand, and laid it gently on His garment. Immediately her disease vanished, and she felt that she was well once more. But the Lord stopped suddenly, turned round, and gazed over the

sea of faces, saying, *Who touched My clothes?* His disciples expressed surprise that He should ask such a question, pressed on all sides as He was by the multitude. But He heeded them not. Still He looked searchingly round, and the trembling woman felt that that Gaze could not be evaded. So at last, coming forward with faltering steps, she fell down before Him to Whom she already owed so much, *and told Him all the truth.* She need not have been afraid. *Daughter,* He said,—and we do not read that He ever addressed any other woman by that title—*Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace!* This was no mere kindly dismissal with a blessing,—though that indeed had been boon enough,—the words here rather mean, *enter into the abiding peace that awaits thee!* Thus doubly blessed was she who *believed* in Him Whom we know, but she knew not, to be the Prince of Peace.

But this incident had occasioned considerable delay, and, owing to the pressure of the multitude, the progress of the Redeemer must have been very slow from the beginning. While He was still speaking to the woman who was healed, some one came to Jairus from his house, and said, *Thy daughter is dead: trouble not the Master.* But the Lord overheard these despairing words, and at once He turned to comfort the bereaved father. *Fear not,* He said kindly, *believe only, and she shall be made whole;* then, disengaging Himself from the crowd, He went home with him, allowing none to follow them except Peter, James, and John. They found the house full of confusion and distress. The chamber of the dead was thronged with weeping relations and friends, while the plaintive notes of the “death flutes” were already to be heard, pre-luding still louder and more public lamentations. But when the Blessed Lord entered, there was a lull. *Why make ye this ado, and weep?* He said looking round on the excited people, *the damsel*

not dead, but sleepeth. At this the mourners laughed with a bitter laugh, for they understood Him not, and they knew well that she, who lay so still upon the bed, slept "that dreamless sleep called Death." The Saviour, however, calmly dismissed every one from the room, except the three disciples and the father and mother of the dead child. Then He went to the bedside, and took the cold hand in His, and said tenderly, *Little maiden! Arise!*—*And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway,* while all those who were present *were astonished,* we read, *with a great astonishment.* Then, having called back the vanished life, the Lord lovingly bethought Himself of its need of immediate support, and *commanded that something should be given her to eat.*

And now the Holy One once more visited the home of His Childhood. Again He appeared, one Sabbath day, in the Nazareth synagogue, and "taught," as before. But his earliest friends still held aloof, and those were not to be won whom He must have especially longed to win. He was not, indeed, violently treated this time, but scarcely anybody believed in Him, so—after laying His healing Hands *upon a few sick folk*—He turned away again, *marvelling at the unbelief* of the Nazarenes. This was their last opportunity—for He never came again—but they let it pass by. The pain of this second rejection at home must have been grievous to the Blessed Lord's tender Spirit, for He knew that it was final, and all "last times" are terrible. But I think—if I may dare to say so—that the first was even worse to bear. For that was a *shock*, that might well have crushed hopefulness, and besides, it was nearer the quiet past, not being divided from it by so much experience of the world's hard ways. Still, however prepared for the refusal of His old friends to receive Him, it must have been with a heavy Heart that the Divine Son of man looked His last upon Nazareth, and left it.

Shortly after this the Lord sent forth the Twelve Apostles, "by two and two," on their first mission. He endowed them with *power over unclean spirits*, charged them to go from place to place, preaching *the Kingdom of God*, and commanded them that they *should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip,—or knapsack—no bread, no money in their purse.* In short, they were to *be careful for nothing*, to trust entirely to wayside hospitality, and to forget self, with all its tastes and its inclinations, in a grand devotion to their Master's cause. By the simplicity of their appearance, as well as by the earnestness of their pleadings, they were to try to draw after them, into the Fold of the Good Shepherd, *the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* *For the Son of man had come to seek and to save that which was lost.* I dare say you have already noticed that the Apostles were of the same number as the sons of the Jacob who gave his other name, *Israel*, to the Jewish nation.

Their short prescribed circuit over, the Twelve reassembled round their Divine Master near Capernaum, and related to Him all their experiences. With His accustomed Kindness, He proposed that they should rest a while after their labours. But spring was advancing, and the country around was alive with groups of slowly-moving pilgrims, all bound for Jerusalem to keep the approaching Passover, so that neither repose nor privacy seemed possible. The Lord therefore, with the Apostles, crossed by boat to the north-eastern shore of Gennesaret, in the hope of finding there the retirement they sought. The distance by water was only six miles, but their movements had been narrowly watched, and when the boat touched ground they found themselves outstripped by a multitude of eager people, who had made all speed round the head of the lake on foot, and were now anxiously waiting for the Lord to land. T

rudely was His kind purpose frustrated, yet at the sight of all these people, far from home, and breathless with a fatigue of which they seemed quite unconscious, His loving Heart only overflowed with compassion, *because they were as sheep not having a shepherd!*—and He began to teach them many things, and to heal them that had need of healing.

And when the day began to wear away, then came the Twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals, for we are here in a desert place. But their Master answered quietly, *They need not depart; give ye them to eat!* The Apostles looked at Him in amazement, not perceiving that He was trying their faith. Bread enough to satisfy so vast a multitude would have cost between twenty and thirty pounds, according to the value of money at that day; while, as Andrew presently reported, they had nothing to offer, except five coarse barley loaves—such as were eaten only by the very poor—and two small fish. The Lord, however, merely desired that these, such as they were, should be brought to Him. Then, St. Mark tells us, *He commanded them to make all sit down, by companies, upon the green grass.* The word here translated “companies” might, more literally, be rendered “flower borders.” St. Mark was not an eye-witness of this scene; he wrote his Memoir of the Blessed Life under the immediate direction of St. Peter. And as the spectacle arose in Peter’s vivid remembrance, the gaily-clad parties of people, stretching far and wide, and resting upon the soft green turf, reminded him of the variegated masses of flowers in some leafy garden. At last, then,—and it must have been a work of time—all were grouped and settled, wonderingly, on the “green grass.” That deeply thoughtful writer, whose beautiful words about the sky I have

already copied for you, has much to say also about the grass. In speaking of this very scene, he thus points out how it teaches us by "its apparent humility and cheerfulness : " *its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service,—appointed to be trodden on and fed upon: its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger next day,—you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots, as if it were grateful,—you tread upon it, and it only sends up richer perfume.* Perhaps, the very next time you go out, you will look at the patient grass with a somewhat fresh interest, remembering that the more it suffers, the more it gives. Possibly you may not have forgotten my saying, in the other little book, that sometimes people do not look for beauty *low enough*.

But now we must return to that expectant multitude, on the green slope by the "sea." The five barley loaves and the two fish were duly placed before the Lord. Then there was a pause.—We almost fancy we can hear, in the stillness, the water lapping softly in the reeds below, for the marshes through which the Jordan pours itself into the lake were close at hand.

He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves. And then followed a stir. For *He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down, and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.* Far more rapidly than the busy Apostles could carry, and the hungry crowds receive it, the food increased—and still increased—in the Holy Hands of the Son of God. And so royal was the abundance, that when all were thoroughly satisfied, and the wondrous repast was over, enough remained in fragments to fill twelve wicker hand-baskets. "More was left than there had been at first!" Yet about five thousand men—St. Matthew adds, *beside women and children*—had been bountifully fed.

The effect produced by this great miracle was v

marked. Swayed as by a single impulse, the people who had witnessed it attempted to surround the Holy One, intending to *take Him by force to make Him a king*. But His Kingdom was not of this world, and He refused earthly distinction. He therefore "sent away" the urgent multitude, and having directed His Apostles to unmoor their boat, and return to Capernaum without Him, He retreated to the solitude of a neighbouring mountain to pray. *And when the evening was come, He was there alone.*

Meanwhile the Twelve had started for the opposite shore. But a strong westerly wind sprang up against them, and brave rowers though they were, they could make but slow progress. Evening presently deepened into night, and the darkness added to their difficulties; yet not one of them seems to have thought, even for a moment, of putting back to the shore where, by His Own Desire, their Master had been left alone. But He was noting their obedient struggles. From the mountain-side He watched the boat, half way across the lake, rocking and rolling, but making no way. Hours wore on, and the last "watch" of the wild night had begun, when—just before dawn, the weary Apostles suddenly perceived, through the dimness and the driving spray, a Figure, facing the storm, and walking on the foaming water in a line with their boat, as if to pass beyond them and lead the way. So strange a sight unnerved them all, and they broke into exclamations of dismay. Immediately, above the rushing blast and the dash of the waves, arose a Voice they all knew well. *Be of good cheer!* It said, *It is I!* *Be not afraid!* Then Peter, always vehement, cried through the storm, *Lord! if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water!* And clearly rang the ready Answer,—*Come!* So the impulsive Apostle stepped boldly over the side of the boat, and for a pace or two he too trod the waves securely. But just then the gale swept down with fresh violence,

and he glanced away from his Master, and down at the swelling waters, and losing heart he cried faintly : *Lord ! save me !* Instantly the Blessed Saviour stretched forth His Hand, and caught him, and said unto him, *O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?* Then, with His abashed disciple, He too entered the boat, and forthwith the wind sank, and the waves went down, so that the western margin of the Lake was soon reached.

It was daylight now, and no sooner had the Lord JESUS stepped ashore than He was recognized as the Mighty Healer. People at once *began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was, and whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment ; and as many as touched Him were made whole.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

I WANT you to fancy yourselves, just for one moment, listening to some one playing on a fine organ. His fingers—let us suppose—have been wandering softly over the notes, pressing forth a quiet strain of sweet, somewhat sad music. But now he is going to pass into a majestic theme, in quite a different key, which will display the full power of the stops and the pedals. Hark ! he does not make the great change suddenly, but he leads up to the new key of the triumphant harmony through “modulating” chords, which gradually prepare the ear for what is coming.

Now I know well that the illustration is far from perfect, but yet the next few pages may be very roughly compared to these “chords of transition.” This chapter will not be like the last. It is really mea

only to be a prelude to the next; for that will record a very grand and solemn Crisis in the Life of the Blessed Lord. But in order that I may relate to you what immediately preceded this great event, I shall give you no account of a journey to Tyre and Sidon, in the far north, which followed upon the incidents narrated in the last chapter. When you read the history of this circuit, which ended on the eastern shore of Gennesaret, you will find that among many other works of mercy, the Great Redeemer again fed a multitude miraculously. Seven loaves then sufficed to satisfy four thousand people, and seven baskets were filled with what was left. But these were deep baskets made of plaited rope, large enough to hold a man. Here, before I go further, let me say something which I should like you to understand. Perhaps some of you have thought that it would be better if, instead of taking up my space in saying how little I have, and talking so much about the events I try to describe, I were to content myself with merely stating the facts themselves. Because I should not then be obliged to omit so much. That is, indeed, quite true. But, if I were only to transfer statements from the Bible to my own pages, it would be simpler for you to read all that happened—as you will some day—in the Bible's own words, which are better far than mine. I would rather tell you a little, and share my thoughts about it with you, than a great deal hurriedly. For after all, as I said at the end of my Old Testament Stories, what I want is “to tell you just enough to make you anxious to know more.” This is why I turn each little picture as much to the light as I can. Now I hope we quite understand one another.

The Apostles, all this time, had been the constant witnesses of the wonderful works, and still more wonderful Life, of their Blessed Master. But they

were Jews, and the Jewish expectation of a Messiah Who should come as a triumphant Conqueror, was deeply implanted in them. It was because the Lord had come "in great humility," and yet advanced un-earthly claims, that so many Pharisees and other rabbis at Jerusalem hated Him, and were plotting to take His Life. During the last Passover season He had stayed away from Jerusalem, in all probability because it was not safe to go there. For until the appointed and predicted time should come, He would not take a single forward step to hasten the End. But now the time *had* come to prove the Apostles,—to ascertain how far their slowly awakening minds had really grasped the Great Fact of their Master's Divine Nature, and then to lead them—strengthened by that grasp—to contemplate those Sufferings of His which must come. Of these Sufferings the Blessed One had not yet spoken plainly, though He had repeatedly referred to them indirectly. And He had generally alluded to Himself as the *Son of God*, or the *Son of man*, and not as the *Messiah*. But now, on entering the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked His disciples this Question: *Whom do men say that I am?* They replied that some believed Him to be John the Baptist, returned from his grave, while others thought He was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or "one of the prophets." *But Whom say ye*, rejoined the Holy One, *that I am?* And Peter answered, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God!* The Response of his Master must have startled him:—*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona! for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven!*—and then the Lord went on to assign to him great future responsibilities in the Church, His Own "mystical Body,"—"which is the blessed company of all faithful people." The privilege of being "stewards of the Mysteries of God" was afterwards conferred on all the Apostles,

but now the hearty declaration of Peter had paved the way for the mournful tidings of all that was to be endured by the Redeemer of mankind, at the cruel hands of men. *And He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake that saying—for the first time—openly.* When the Twelve heard these distinct and terrible details, they were greatly shocked. Peter, the very one who had just before so devoutly acknowledged his Master's Godhead, was now the first to shrink from his Master's revelation. Drawing near to Him, he murmured: *Be it far from Thee, Lord! this shall not be unto Thee!* But the Holy One turned quickly round upon him as if he were a tempter, and reproved him as unreservedly as He had just now blessed him. *Get thee behind Me, Satan!*—"enemy"—He exclaimed, *thou art an offence unto Me! for thou savourest not*—that is, "thy thoughts are not dwelling on"—*the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*

Peter, as I have told you, looked over—some think that he partly dictated—St. Mark's Biography of the Blessed Lord. It accordingly contains a record of this sharp rebuke, but no mention whatever of the special blessing and privileges which were first granted to him. The Evangelists never suppress or excuse their own faults and failings, but what is creditable or honourable to themselves they keep as much as possible in the background.

Having reproved Peter, the Saviour turned to the people standing round, among whom were many of His disciples, and announced in the plainest terms that those who cast in their lot with Him had nothing to expect in this world. His was no earthly kingdom, and no earthly gain or glory awaited those who entered It. They must be prepared, on the contrary,

to stake their very lives for the Sake of their Master, and self-sacrifice must be their watchword, as it had been His. *If any man will come*—that is, “resolves” to come—*after Me*, He said, *let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me!*

The Lord JESUS had already been deserted by many who once had lingered near Him. Soon after the first “miracle of the loaves and fishes,” He had declared Himself to be *the Living Bread Which came down from heaven. The Bread of God*, He had said, *is He Which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.—If any man eat of This Bread, he shall live for ever, and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, Which I will give for the life of the world.* And again: *He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.* At the end of the Discourse in which these passages occur, we read that *from that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.* And now, the plain Words He had just uttered, which dashed all hopes of earthly grandeur to the ground, could not fail still further to “sift” His followers, and to separate the half-hearted from the true.

But His Apostles were now prepared for the worst, and a marvellous Disclosure awaited three of their number, which might well help and strengthen them to face it. These were the three who had already been chosen to represent the Twelve in the death-chamber of the little daughter of Jairus. Peter, who was so enthusiastic and so affectionate,—James, who was to be the first to die for his Blessed Master,—and John, the “beloved disciple.” But as yet they knew nothing of what was at hand, except what little they may have vaguely gathered from the Blessed Saviour’s closing Words: *Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with Power.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

ON the evening of the seventh day after His utterance of these mysterious Words, the Blessed Redeemer called the three Apostles, *and went up into a mountain to pray*:—over the six days' interval all the Evangelists pass in silence. The mountain to which the chosen three followed their Master was probably one of the "spurs," or off-shoots, of the snow-crowned Hermon. This noblest and loftiest of all the mountains of the Holy Land towered on its Syrian border, to the north-east of Cæsarea Philippi, where the Lord and His disciples had been staying. A modern traveller tells us that light clouds form suddenly above its snowy summit, sweep down upon it, and dissolve, with a rapidity that is very remarkable; so that, to one who watches, Hermon seems to be continually veiling and unveiling his proud head.

Having ascended to a retired spot, high on the mountain's shoulder, the Holy One became absorbed in silent prayer, while the Apostles, weary after the day's work, lay down upon the turf, and soon fell asleep in the darkening twilight. How long they slept we do not know. But when they awoke it was with a start. A flood of Heavenly Radiance dazzled them at first, but when their bewilderment was past, they beheld a truly amazing Spectacle. Their Master was still there, indeed, but He was *transfigured*. An unspeakable change had taken place in His Appearance. *His Face*, we read, *did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light*. His Human Form seemed transparent, so brightly did the surpassing Glory of His Divinity shine through It. Truly He had "covered Himself with light as with a garment." Nor was this all. Two glorious forms from the World Invisible were there also. And the awe-struck Apostles instantly

knew them—who shall say how?—to be Moses and Elijah. These were speaking to the Holy One—and the trembling listeners *understood what they said*—“of the Decease Which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.” Then—while the three spectators still gazed in thrilling amazement—it was over. The law-giver and the prophet vanished again into the Unseen, and, overcome with emotion, Peter—always the speaker—spoke. *Lord!* he murmured tremulously, hardly knowing indeed what he said, *it is good for us to be here! if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias!* But scarcely were his confused ideas expressed, when a Golden Cloud of Glory stooped suddenly over the mountain, and from it spoke a Voice, saying: *This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased! hear ye Him.* The Apostles fell upon their faces in terror, but the Lord JESUS came forward, with His unvarying Kindness, and, gently touching them, said: *Arise! and be not afraid!* And when at last, and still fearfully, they raised their heads, He was alone, nor did any trace remain on the spot of the Heavenly Splendour which they had been permitted to behold. This Glimpse of their Beloved Master’s True Nature had been granted them, that they might meet and bear the future manfully; but for a time their lips were to be sealed. As they came down the mountain path, the Lord charged them to tell no one What they had seen *till the Son of man were risen from the dead.*

The Transfiguration was a great Event in the Blessed Redeemer’s Life. After it, we note a change. Miracles there still were, but they were not of continual occurrence, as before. And while His public Addresses became fewer, henceforth He conversed privately with His disciples more, and the central subject of these affecting Discourses was always the Cross, to which He was now drawing near. At His Baptism, as at His Transfiguration, the Voice of the Father had

openly and solemnly declared Him to be His Beloved Son. The one Heavenly Utterance marked the Beginning of His short Public Ministry; the Other marked its Approaching End.

The Lord had scarcely reached the plain with His three Apostles, when a man came up to Him, bringing his only son, who had long been tormented by a fierce dumb spirit. *If Thou canst do anything*, said the poor father, imploringly, *have compassion on us, and help us!* And the Blessed One answered: *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* Upon this the man cried out, and said with tears, *Lord, I believe! help Thou mine unbelief!* Then the Redeemer rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

I must pass on now to tell you that although the Lord JESUS had avoided Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, He suddenly appeared there before the autumn Feast of Bowers, or Tabernacles, was over. During this visit to the Holy City He bestowed sight upon a man who had been born blind, and attracted many new followers by His gracious Teaching. The anger of His enemies was very great, but the time had now come to brave it; nor could they seize Him before the appointed Hour, though more than once they tried to do so. Once, during this sojourn at Jerusalem, *they took up stones to cast at Him.* Yet He was not hurt. As at Nazareth, He went safely through the midst of them, and so passed by.

It was about this time, and probably from Judea, that the Lord sent forth seventy of His disciples, *two and two, into every city and place whither He Himself would come.* They received directions like those previously given to the Twelve, and at the time appointed they returned "with joy" to their Master, declaring that they had found His Holy Name all-powerful, even over evil spirits. And

now, as winter came on, the Saviour again entered Jerusalem, just before the Festival of the Dedication of the Temple. And again, when He proclaimed His Oneness with the Father, *the Jews took up stones to stone Him*. But He confronted them with a Calmness truly Divine. *If I do not the Works of My Father*, He said, *believe Me not ! but if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him*. Then, enraged, *they sought again to take Him ; but He escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized ; and there He abode*. And many resorted unto Him, and said, *" John did no miracle ; but all things that John spake of This Man were true."* And many believed on Him there.

It was while lingering in this neighbourhood, that the Blessed Lord so forcibly taught, in the beautiful Parables of the "lost sheep," the "lost coin," and the "prodigal son," the precious Truth that *God is Love*.—*I say unto you*, He said, *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth*. Among His listeners there were doubtless many who were ashamed of their past lives, and many despised by their neighbours, like the poor woman who had crept into the house of Simon the Pharisee. How glad they must have been to hear the "Good Tidings" that, if only *they were willing* to arise, and go to their Father, and say, each, unto Him, "Father, I have sinned !" that Divinely Loving Father would see them coming a great way off, and would be found waiting to receive them with tenderness as well as forgiveness !—It was also here, probably—or on His way here—that the Redeemer uttered His farewell Lament over Jerusalem. He knew that his next visit to that sacred City would be His last, and His pitiful Heart yearned over the wild wilfulness of her people. *O Jerusalem ! Jerusalem ! He mourned, thou that*

killst the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !

During the past few months, and possibly longer, the Lord had been somewhat cheered by the friendship of a little family at Bethany, a quiet village in the hills, not far from Jerusalem. The household consisted of two sisters, named Martha and Mary, and their brother, who was called Lazarus. Their cottage was at all times open to the Blessed Saviour, and Mary's personal devotion to Him was very marked. While her hospitable sister busied herself in providing for the comfort of their Divine Guest, she sat reverently at His Feet, "and heard His Word." Nothing is told us about the character of Lazarus, but much may be inferred from the fact that the Lord regarded him affectionately, as a dear friend. To the Redeemer, in His retirement, there now came from Martha and Mary this touching message : *Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick !* That was all. They did not ask the Great Healer to come, for no doubt they felt sure that He would come, without being asked. *Now, says St. John, Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus ; when He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was.* He did not go, and during those "two days" Lazarus died. On the third day, however, He set out for Bethany. But first He told His disciples—for He knew all things—that Lazarus was dead : *and I am glad for your sakes,* He added, *that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe ; nevertheless, let us go unto him !* So the Apostles followed their Master, though not without misgivings, for Bethany was only two miles from Jerusalem, where His fiercest enemies were plotting His death. But Thomas encouraged the others ; *Let us also go,* he said, *that we may die with Him !*

Together, accordingly, they all journeyed, as far as the outskirts of the familiar village. Here the Lord paused, and here Martha, who had heard of His Approach, came to meet Him. *Lord!* she exclaimed mournfully, when she saw Him for Whom, so few days ago, they had longed in vain, *Lord! if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that, even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.* At first the Lord only replied briefly that her brother would rise again. But "the Resurrection at the Last Day," to which she thought He was referring, seemed to Martha, just then, a very long way off, and she was craving for present comfort. So she responded but faintly. And then the Saviour spoke those Precious Words to her which have since greeted so many thousands of mourners with their dead, at the open Churchyard gate: *I am the Resurrection and the Life! He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.* Did Martha, He asked, really believe this? And Martha answered that she did indeed believe Him to be *the Christ, the Son of God.* But now she thought of Mary, and hurrying back to the village, she *called her secretly, saying, The Master is come!* This caution was necessary, because among all the friends who had come out from Jerusalem to condole with the bereaved sisters, there were many of the Lord's enemies, who, as Martha well knew, would be only too glad to give notice to the authorities there that He was so near. As for Mary, she no sooner heard "the Master's" Name than she made all speed to reach Him, and falling at His Feet she exclaimed, as Martha had done: *Lord! if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died!* Then she burst into tears, and at the sight of her affliction, He Who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, wept also. But many of Mary's friends from Jerusalem had

followed her, supposing that she was going where mourners naturally go,—to the grave. So that the Presence of the Redeemer was no longer a secret. But He heeded not the mocking whispers of some who now stood near; His Thoughts were all with the poor sisters, whose grief He could not bear to see. Presently He asked where they had buried their dead, and they led the way to a cave in the limestone hill near. Here, in a recess cut in the side, according to custom, the corpse was laid, and the mouth of the grave was filled by a heavy block of stone.

Four days had now passed since Lazarus died. Yet the Lord said, *Take ye away the stone!* And while this was being done, He looked up to heaven, and—to the Father Who was with Him always—He spoke these Words: *Father! I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me,—and I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.* Then, after a moment's pause—while all stood breathless before the silent, open tomb—*He cried with a loud Voice: Lazarus! Come forth!* Instantly there was movement in the grave,—and *he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes.* By the kindly Command of the Life-giver, however, his limbs were at once freed from their binding, and he walked back, in health and strength, to the house from which he had been carried a corpse four days before.

Many of the Jews who had witnessed this great miracle ceased to scoff, and believed on Him Whom their friend Mary called "Master." *But some of them,* says St. John, *went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things JESUS had done.* Thus the very thing happened which the disciples of the Blessed One had been anxious to prevent. Many of the leading rabbis at Jerusalem, dreading the growing influence of the Lord over the people, and per-

suading themselves that it might lead to a revolt which would provoke the Roman wrath, now brought all their power to bear against Him. A council was hurriedly called, at which Caiaphas, the acting high priest that year, presided, and it was formally decided to put the Holy One to death. The only point left to be considered was the easiest way of accomplishing this terrible purpose. *JESUS therefore, we are told by St. John, walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued.* The time was fast approaching when for Him, *despised and rejected of men*, no place in the wide world would be safe. But in this lonely village He found a last hiding-place, and when He left it the Appointed Hour was drawing near, and—passing along the border-line between Galilee and Samaria—He began to move, by slow stages, and for the last time, towards Jerusalem.

CHAPTER X.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

IN the course of this slow, indirect, Farewell Journey, and probably on the eastern bank of the Jordan, certain mothers brought their little ones to the Lord JESUS, in the hope that He might *touch them*, and were rebuked by the Apostles for doing so. But when the Blessed Saviour heard the rebuke *He was much displeased*, and said: *Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God!* Then, stooping, He lifted the little ones tenderly in His Arms, laid His Hands upon them, and fondly blessed them.

The next day His Loving Heart was touched again, though not this time by children. A rich young man, of high position and character, ran after Him as He was travelling slowly on, and, kneeling before Him,

asked anxiously what he could do to secure eternal life. From his childhood, he said, he had observed the commands of the Law; what more was there to be done? *Then, writes St. Mark, JESUS beholding him, loved him, and said unto him: One thing thou lackest! go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come! take up thy cross, and follow Me!* But alas! the young man, to whom such Love was given, could not stand the test. *He was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.* And the Saviour, looking sadly round at His disciples, exclaimed: *How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!*

After a while, the Jordan was crossed again, and the Blessed Lord pursued His Way, more directly, towards Jerusalem. By this time the roads were thronged, as usual, with people going up to keep the Passover, and among the crowds were many beggars, attracted by the hope of alms from the pilgrims. About seven or eight miles from the river lay Jericho, in its fruitful plain, and by the roadside, just at the entrance of the town, there sat one of these beggars, named Bar-Timæus, who was blind. Blindness is far more common in the East than in England. This is no doubt because the glare of the sun is much brighter there than here, and besides, the hot dry winds often drive sand-storms before them, and sand is very injurious to the eyes. This blind beggar presently heard some one in the crowd say that *JESUS of Nazareth* was just passing by; and immediately he made a loud appeal for help, to the Great Helper. *JESUS!* he cried, *Thou Son of David! have mercy on me!* In vain the people round him bade him be silent; he only repeated his cry for pity in still louder tones. The Redeemer listened, stopped, and desired that the person who called to Him should be brought forward. Then,

bending kindly—we may be sure—over the blind beggar, He said : *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* And Bar-Timæus answered eagerly : *Lord, that I might—if only I might—receive my sight!* And JESUS said unto him : *go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole!* And immediately he received his sight, and followed JESUS in the way. The Lord's Way, you see, was his too, now.

St. Matthew says that *two* blind men were cured on this occasion. The second sufferer, however, appears to have been healed the following morning, as the Saviour was leaving Jericho, after spending the night in the house of a "collector of customs," named Zacchæus. This man belonged to a hated class, and had grown rich—not, perhaps, quite honestly—in a hated occupation. The people of the town looked upon him as a plunderer, and were surprised that the Lord should choose to become his Guest. But after that night Zacchæus amended his life ; he was dishonest no more. So deeply did he feel the honour of the visit, and the unspeakable Holiness of the Visitor, that he vowed henceforth to give half of all that he had to the poor, and to restore, to any persons whom he might have defrauded, four times as much as they had lost. Thus, in merely "passing by," did the Good Shepherd seek and save one of the very last who might have been expected ever to *lead a new life, following the Commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His Holy ways.*

Fifteen miles more, up the steep, fatiguing mountain road, and the Last Journey was over. Before three o'clock in the afternoon of Friday, the eighth day of the month Nisan, the Holy One once more reached the friendly cottage-home at Bethany. Here He was sure of a welcome, and here He spent the Sabbath, His last on earth. In the evening He was invited, with His Apostles, to a repast, provided by Martha and Mary at the house of a friend—perhaps a relation

—named Simon, who had once been a leper, and was very likely indebted to the Great Healer for his cure. Lazarus also, who had been dead, and was alive again, was there. In the course of the little feast, Mary reverently approached the Divine Guest, with an alabaster casket, containing a pound's weight of liquid spikenard,—a perfume of the costliest kind—with which she anointed His Head and Feet so profusely that the whole room was scented. To this some of the Apostles, led by Judas Iscariot, objected, on the ground that it was wasteful; but the Blessed Lord reproved them, declaring that wherever the gospel should be preached, throughout the world, Mary's graceful act of devotion should *be spoken of for a memorial of her*.

By this time the news of His Arrival at Bethany had reached Jerusalem, and crowds came out to see Him, while His enemies in the City began to plot the destruction of Lazarus also, because his restoration to life had made such an impression on the people. The next day,—the Jewish Monday—which we commemorate as “Palm Sunday,” came. You have already heard that it was the custom for pilgrims to enter the Holy City, for the Passover, in orderly processions, with joyous music and waving banners. And now, as there was no longer any need to restrain the ardour of the people,—*the Hour* having come—the Redeemer prepared to conform to this custom. Setting out early in the morning from Bethany, He sent two of His disciples into Bethphage, a village close by, saying: *Straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to Me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say: The Lord hath need of them! and straightway he will send them.* Hitherto the Saviour had always entered Jerusalem on Foot; but now the prophecy of Zechariah was to be fulfilled: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, thy King*

cometh unto thee ! He is Just, and having Salvation,—Lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. The asses used by the Jews were larger, fleet-footed, and more valuable than ours. Solomon had introduced horses from Egypt, but the ass was consecrated by many national associations, and it was also the emblem of peace. From very early times, young animals, which had never carried or drawn a burden, had been chosen for sacred purposes. So, when the two disciples—having found all at Bethphage exactly as their Master foretold—returned to Him, it was on the ass-colt, over which they flung their mantles to serve as trappings, that the Blessed One rode, while the mother probably walked by its side. *And a very great multitude*, St. Matthew tells us, *spread their garments in the way ; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying : Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord ! Hosanna in the highest !* Thus, between the plantations of palm-trees, the orchards, vineyards, and olive-gardens that bordered the road, the procession wound slowly along. And presently glad throngs poured out of the city, and *took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried : Hosanna ! blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the Name of the Lord !*

But at the turn of the road, where the City came full into view, a Voice of mourning arose among the joyful songs of the people. The Holy One had paused, His Eyes resting wistfully on Jerusalem, as she lay before Him in all her beauty, the golden spires of her proud white Temple flashing and glittering in the morning sun. He had lamented over her when He left her for the last time, and now that He was approaching her for the last time—no more to go away, except so far as to Calvary—He lamented over her again. *He beheld the city*, St. Luke records, *and*

wept over it, saying : If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! But now they are hid from thine eyes ! For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee ; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy Visitation ! Then the sad, tender Voice ceased, and again the procession advanced, and crossed the bridge over the "brook Kidron," and entered the gate of the faithless City. *And when He was come into Jerusalem,* writes St. Matthew, *all the city was moved, saying : Who is This ? And the multitude said : This is JESUS, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.* Travel-stained pilgrims were not allowed to go beyond the foot of Mount Moriah without purification. Here, therefore, the crowd dispersed, and the Lord, removing His sandals, entered the Temple alone. But He did not stay there, for the afternoon was waning, and after one long, grave look around, on all the unseemly traffic within the Sacred Building, He withdrew, and returned for the night to Bethany. The next morning found Him again in Jerusalem, and again—as long ago—He expelled the money-changers, and "those that bought and sold," from the Temple courts. And now the blind, and lame, and all who needed bodily relief, surrounded Him in His "Father's House," and He received and healed them willingly. So enthusiastic became the people, that even the children caught the spirit of their elders, and loudly shouted *Hosanna to the Son of David !* The angry priests and rabbis who stood by—and would have seized Him, but that they feared the excited crowd—frowned at these children, as if to silence them. But the Lord turned round, and shamed them by asking if they, who boasted of their knowledge, had never read this passage in the eighth Psalm : *Out*

of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise! Thus the day rolled away, and after its fatigues the Holy One again retired to the shelter of Martha's cottage at Bethany, though only to return into the City with the morning.

But I cannot dwell, as I would, on all that was said and done in these last solemn days. You will one day read, with an interest which I trust this little book may have humbly helped to kindle, the burning Words in which the Blessed Saviour at this time denounced those who pretended to be what they were not. No character was so hateful to Him as the untrue, that is, the *unreal* one. The people who made an outward show of religion without any inward practice, whose lips pronounced the Name of God while their hearts were far away from Him, provoked His Righteous Anger far more swiftly than undisguised sinners. *Woe unto you!* He cried, eight solemn times, to those Pharisees and rabbis who were "hypocrites," that is, *actors*, or players of a part. But though these false teachers hated Him more and more for His exposure of their secret sins, they were compelled to wait—and they waited impatiently—for an opportunity of revenge. For their wicked attempts to entrap Him into some word or act of disrespect to the Roman Government had utterly failed, so that they had no excuse for seizing Him, and violence they dared not use while Jerusalem was so full of the country people who adored and would have defended Him.

And there will be the last touching Addresses of the Lord to His disciples for you to read, when you are old enough to enter into them. In these He warned them affectionately of the coming judgment upon Jerusalem, of the persecutions with which they must meet for His Sake, and of the Last Great Day of His Own Appearing *to judge the quick and the dead*. And He alluded to His departure from them, now so near, in very pathetic terms: *Th*

Son of man, He said, is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore ! for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh—at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all,—Watch !

Two incidents which I must record occurred on one of these memorable days. The Redeemer was sitting in one of the outer courts of the Temple, watching the people who were dropping into the treasure-chests the offerings which it was usual to make just before the Passover. Many came and went, under His silent observation, and at length a poor widow humbly presented herself, and slipped two very small copper coins into the sacred chest. She belonged to that helpless and needy class especially oppressed by the hard-hearted "hypocrites" among the authorities. The Lord marked what she gave, and knew that she, at least, was no "actor." Calling His disciples to Him, He said, *Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury ! For all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living !*—And then the Apostles Philip and Andrew mentioned that strangers from the West had come, as strangers from the East once came, to Jerusalem, and were anxious, as they had been, to behold Him Who was the King of the Jews. They were Greeks, and had mentioned their wish to Philip, perhaps because of his Greek name. *Sir*, they had said, *We would see JESUS !* And now they were waiting, in the "court of the Gentiles." When the Lord heard of the arrival of these foreigners, He exclaimed : *The Hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified !* and went on to speak almost joyously of His Coming Death, and of

the inconceivable blessings that would spring from It. But suddenly His Voice faltered, and the heavy shadow of all that lay between Him and death fell for a moment across His Spirit. Words passed His Lips which ours seem unworthy even to repeat. Let us hear them with bowed heads and hearts full of thankful awe, for they touch the Mystery of Sinless Pain, which such as we can never know. *Now is My Soul troubled!* said the Holy One, *and what shall I say? Father! Save Me from this Hour! But for this cause came I unto this Hour. Father! Glorify Thy Name!* And immediately the Voice of the Father spoke, as at the Baptism and at the Transfiguration, and the startled people looked at one another, and up at the blue April sky, in speechless amazement. *I have both glorified It,* the Divine Voice said, *and will glorify It again!*

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

THE opportunity, for which the enemies of the Blessed Saviour were watching so eagerly, came at last, and very unexpectedly. *One of His own Twelve trusted Apostles* came to the chief priests, and said: *What will ye give me? and I will deliver Him unto you!* It was Judas "Iscaiot,"—that is, "of Kerioth," a little village in the south of Judea—the only one of the Twelve whose home was in that part of the country. His question tells his whole story, and reveals his besetting sin: *What will ye give me?* He had made *gain* his god. His attraction and attachment to the Lord had probably been genuine at first, but the Jewish ideas of a triumphant Messiah had pre-occupied his mind. He longed for and expected a place of dignity in an earthly kingdom, and when—just before the Transfiguration—he perceived, or half perceived his mistake, the shock brought disenchantment with

it. Since then his discontent had been gradually increasing; at every allusion to his Master's Death his selfish hopes sank lower. They had revived for a moment with the recent Public Entry into Jerusalem, but that too had led only to fresh disappointment. And this was not all. He had a guilty conscience. He had been trusted with the charge of such money as was necessary to the Apostolic band, and—little by little—he had fallen into the habit of using it for himself. *He was a thief*, says St. John, plainly. And then, when living in deliberate sin, he felt the Perfect Holiness of his Blessed Master a continual reproach to him, so that his lingering regard for Him changed slowly into dislike. At last *Satan*—the “enemy” of God and man—*put it into his heart* to betray the Redeemer *for money*. The more he cared about himself, you see, the less he cared about his Master. The chief priests received him with glad surprise, and agreed to pay him the usual price for a full-grown slave, thirty silver pieces, equal to about three pounds, thirteen shillings, of our money. Then he promised to find them some opportunity of arresting the Blessed Lord quietly, when there would be no fear of a riot among the people.

In the meantime the Week was passing, and the fourteenth day of Nisan was close at hand. Peter and John went into the City from Bethany, with instructions from their Master to prepare for a private celebration of the Passover in the “large upper room” of a particular house, which probably belonged to some one whom He knew well. They were to find this house by following a man who would be seen carrying a jar of water. Women, and not men, were the usual water-carriers, so that this man was easily recognized, and the house and room having been thus found without difficulty, the two Apostles at once prepared the feast. The lamb, we may conclude, had been already procured, on the appointed tenth day of

the month, but lettuce, endive, and other bitter leaves were required to eat with it. And flat cakes of unleavened bread were always provided, besides an acid sauce—or conserve—of spiced fruits, called *charoseth*, and four or five cups of red wine mixed with water. These cups were placed before the *celebrant*, that is, the person presiding at the feast, who was either the master of the house or the most distinguished guest.

All was ready in due time, and in the evening, the Lord Jesus and His Twelve Apostles having assembled in the "upper room," the Paschal Feast began. The Saviour, affectionately assuring His disciples that He had *heartily desired* to eat this Passover with them before He suffered, took one of the four cups of wine in His Hand, and *gave thanks*, after which all present drank from it. But after this, solemn though the moment was, some disagreement arose among the Twelve, as to *which of them should be accounted the greatest*. It was not the first time that they had thus disputed, and the Lord rebuked them gently, as He had done before, for their unworthy feelings, reminding them of the humble position which He Himself had chosen. And then He proceeded to teach them a wonderfully touching lesson of humility. Laying aside His upper robe, *He took a towel*—St. John tells us—*and girded Himself*. *After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded*. Peter, quick to feel his own unworthiness, shrank back at first, but the Holy One performed this lowly office for them all alike. Think what Judas must have felt, when his turn came, and his Divine Master stooped before him! Then the Lord, returning to the couch, pointed out to His Apostles that He had just set them an Example which they must be careful to follow. But suddenly, remembering that one of them was a traitor, He became *troub*

in Spirit, and added sadly ; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.* Eleven of the Twelve looked at each other in amazement, for they knew nothing of the treachery of the twelfth. One after another they asked in agitated tones : *Lord, is it I ?* And at last Judas—the actor—dared to say, *Is it I ?* The Lord assented, but probably in a very low Voice, and added aloud, as if the presence of guilt oppressed Him, *That thou doest, do quickly.* Upon this, Judas rose hastily and went away, out into the gathering darkness, but none except his Master knew why. To John, indeed, who was reclining next to Him, the Saviour had said that he to whom He should give a fragment of the unleavened bread, after dipping it into the *charoseth*, might be known as the false disciple ; but it is probable that He spoke scarcely above a whisper, and even John could only partly have grasped the real meaning of His Words. When Judas was gone, the Blessed One seemed relieved, and Expressions of Divine Love, which none of the Eleven could ever forget, flowed freely from His Lips. *A New Commandment I give unto you, He said, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

Then, as the Paschal meal progressed, He took up one of the unleavened cakes, *and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said : Take, eat ; this is My Body, Which is broken*—or given—that is, “on the point of being broken, or given,” *for you : this do in remembrance of Me.* Then He took the third cup of wine—called the cup of blessing—and gave thanks, *and gave it to them, saying : Drink ye all of it ; for this is My Blood of the new testament*—that is, “covenant”—*Which is shed for many for the remission of sins ; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.* Thus simply—in the institution of “the Lord’s Supper,” or “Holy Communion of the Body and

Blood of our Saviour Christ"—did the New Covenant displace the Old. The sacrificial lamb had hitherto been the central point of the Passover Feast. But now the Blessed Lamb of God was on the point of offering Himself on the altar of His Cross, *a Full, Perfect, and Sufficient Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.* And so the Bread and Wine, as sacramental symbols of His Body and Blood, were brought into prominence, instead of the lamb. And now, having, "to our great and endless comfort," ordained these "holy mysteries, as pledges of His Love, and for a continual remembrance of His Death," the Lord JESUS began at once to speak of His coming desertion by the Apostles. Peter, with his usual self-confidence, interrupted Him. Whatever others might do, he said, *he* would never forsake or deny Him. Little did he know himself. "Satan had desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat," but One stronger than Satan had "prayed for him." Nevertheless, he was now assured by that Loving Master that, before the cock should twice crow in the coming dawn, he would three times deny Him.

After this sad prediction, the Holy One passed into an earnest farewell conversation with His beloved Eleven, never more dear than now, when He knew—though they could hardly believe—that they were about to desert Him. He strove to cheer their sinking spirits by Promises of unspeakable sweetness. *Let not your heart be troubled,* He said, *soothingly ; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions ; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a Place for you. And if I go and prepare a Place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that Where I am, There ye may be also. And again : I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more ; but ye see Me ; because I live, ye shall live also. As a mother fondly hushe*

her child, even so—only far more tenderly—did the Blessed Lord continue to soothe and comfort His downcast disciples until the moment of parting came. *The Comforter*, He said, *Which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, Whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, My Peace I give unto you! not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!* And at last, looking up to heaven, He solemnly commended them to His Father's Care, together with all who "through their word" should believe in Him. *Father,—so prayed the Son of God for all His faithful followers—Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me Where I am! that they may behold My Glory, which thou hast given Me: for thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.* But the night was creeping away, and when, after that pleading Voice had ceased, a hymn—probably Psalm cxviii.—had been sung, the little company broke up for the last time. *Arise*, said the Master, *let us go hence.* Then they all passed out together into the moonlight, through the city gate, across the Kidron bridge, into a garden—or olive orchard—called Gethsemane, which lay on the slope of Mount Olivet. Leaving eight of the Apostles near its entrance, the Lord Jesus advanced into the quiet shadows of the olive-trees, accompanied only by the three who had witnessed His Transfiguration. Presently He paused, and exclaiming that *His Soul was exceeding sorrowful unto death*, He begged these three, as a last request, to "watch with" Him, and then withdrew, alone, still deeper into the solemn shade, and there knelt down to pray—*Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me! nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done.* Such was His Prayer. *And there appeared an angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him.*

And being in an Agony, He prayed more earnestly : and His sweat was as it were great drops of Blood, falling down to the ground. Such was His Anguish of Spirit, endured for your sakes and mine. But of the fearful struggle in which the angel came to support Him, I scarcely dare to speak, so far is such a Mystery beyond the range of our understandings. Now that the time of the great tempter was so short, he assailed the Holy One with redoubled vehemence, and all that can be appalling and terrible to Sinless Human Nature was gathered up and presented in that awful conflict. Three times while it lasted, the suffering Saviour rose from His Knees, and went to His three chosen disciples. But they had no sympathy to give Him, for each time He found them asleep. The first time He said to Peter, who had been so sure of himself: *Simon, sleepest thou?—couldst not thou watch one hour?—*but then immediately followed a kind allowance for human weakness—*the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.* And turning away, He went back, Alone, to “pray more earnestly” among the olive-trees, and He *spoke the same Words.* But the third time He came He roused the sleepers. *Rise up, let us go!* He said, *lo! he that betrayeth Me is at hand.* It was too late; they had not helped Him for “one hour,” even by their poor sympathy, and now none could help Him. Even while He spoke, torches flashed over the quiet garden, and the forms of many armed men loomed large in the indistinct light. They were not without a guide. Judas of Kerioth, the traitor, was leading the way. He knew Gethsemane well, for *JESUS oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples.* Stepping up to the Blessed One, he kissed Him with a show of great affection, and said: *Hail, Master!* And his having chosen *this* way of pointing out His Master to His enemies speaks volumes as to the hardness of the hypocrite’s heart. *Whomsoever I shall kiss, he had explained beforehand, that same is He; hol*

Him fast! But no signal was wanted. *Judas, said the Lord gently, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*—then, turning with quiet Dignity to the armed men, He asked whom they sought? *They answered him, 'JESUS of Nazareth.'* *JESUS saith unto them: I am He.* He surrendered Himself at once, stipulating only for the safety of His Apostles; and they, half beside themselves with fear, *all forsook Him, and fled.* This was how they employed the freedom He had begged for them!—but not before Peter, true to his character, had struck one of his Master's foes impulsively, wounding, and nearly severing, his right ear. The Blessed Lord at once reproved the hasty Apostle, reminding him that He stood in no need of such defence, for His Father was able to protect Him, in a moment, *with more than twelve legions of angels.* *But how then,* He added, *shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* Then, with pathetic courtesy, He requested of the officers of the Temple guard, who were about to bind Him, a moment's grace, that He might heal the man whom Peter had hurt. *Suffer ye thus far!* He said, and then gently touched the ear of His enemy with the Hand that was left for a last moment free,—and healed it.

And now, bound, and a Prisoner, the Son of God was led back over the bridge into the City, and to the palace which was probably occupied both by Caiaphas, the high priest, and by Annas, who was his father-in-law, and the president of the *Sanhedrin*, or great Jewish Council. It was midnight, but the enemies of the Blessed One were on the alert. Stealthy footsteps sounded through the moonlit streets, and "chief priests, scribes, and elders" hurriedly assembled, to be in readiness for their Divine Victim. First, however, He was taken into the presence of Annas, who probably received Him in an inner court, or open room, adjoining the square courtyard of the palace.

Before long, two of the Twelve, repenting of their cowardly panic, presented themselves at the outer gateway: one of them—John—knew the high priest, and was admitted into the entrance-court; the other—Peter—stayed outside. But presently John spoke to the portress at the gate, and she gave him leave to bring his friend in. Much—at least to one of the two Apostles—turned upon this slight circumstance. The night was cold, and as Peter went up to the charcoal fire in the court to warm himself, his features became plainly visible in the firelight, and the woman who had admitted him recognised him. She came forward, and said abruptly: *Art not thou also one of This Man's disciples?* And Peter, startled back into cowardice, lied to her. *I am not!* he said, and moved away. But—as he moved—the cock crew. The warning, however, was lost on him, for when another servant, looking hard at him, exclaimed: *This fellow was also with JESUS of Nazareth!* he answered angrily: *I do not know the Man!* and strengthened his denial with an oath. But now a relation of the person he had wounded in Gethsemane came up to him, and said pointedly: *Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?* Then Peter began to curse and to swear, saying: *I know not This Man of Whom ye speak!* And—the second time—the cock crew. And the Lord turned, and looked—probably through the archway of the inner court—at His faithless servant. Ah, what a Look was that! Over Peter, as he caught its Love and Pity, suddenly rushed an overwhelmingly bitter remembrance of his Blessed Master's Words: *Even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*

And he went away, out into the silent streets, and burst into a passion of penitent tears.

CHAPTER XII.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

FROM Annas the Blessed Lord was soon sent—still bound—to Caiaphas, but not before He had been subjected to evil and insulting treatment of which it is terrible even to think. Round Caiaphas—whose apartments may have been in the same building, or distant only by the breadth of the courtyard—the members of the Jewish Council had by this time collected in formal array. False witnesses had been summoned, but their evidence quickly fell to the ground. Caiaphas therefore could only hope to draw from the august and silent Prisoner Himself some admission of the pretensions which His enemies called “blasphemy.” *I adjure Thee, by the Living God*, he said, rising from his seat, *that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* And the Blessed One replied: *I am ; and ye shall see the Son of man, sitting on the Right Hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* It was enough. Caiaphas had easily gained his point. He turned with gestures of horror to the Council, exclaiming: *Ye have heard the blasphemy! What think ye?* And *they answered and said: He is guilty of death.*

But though the Jews had thus condemned the Holy One, they could not carry out their sentence unless it were confirmed by Pontius Pilate, the “procurator” of Judea, who—albeit subject to the governor of Syria—possessed the powers of “imperial commissioner” in his own province. His headquarters were at Cæsarea—[not Cæsarea Philippi]—but he was just now on duty in Jerusalem, being bound to maintain order there during the great Festivals. As yet, however, it was only three o’clock in the morning, and early as Oriental habits are, there was some little necessary delay before the appeal to

Pilate could be made. In this interval the Blessed Saviour was left to the brutal violence of His guards. They heaped upon Him—upon *Him, the Lamb of God*—the coarsest and most revolting indignities. They smote Him, they mocked Him, they blindfolded and even spat on Him. Yet the Divine Sufferer accepted it all in silent meekness; *as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His Mouth.* And at last Pilate was ready. He was unwillingly obliged to investigate the matter, because the Holy One was charged with “stirring up the people,” and with calling Himself, in disregard of the Roman authority, *the King of the Jews.* At first, however, he questioned Him in private. *Art Thou,* he asked in irony, *the King of the Jews?* And the Blessed Son of God answered: *My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now is My Kingdom not from hence.* Pilate gazed at Him in genuine amazement. *But art Thou a King, then?* he asked, persistently. And the Great Accused replied, with Divine Calmness: *Thou sayest that I am, —a King!* The procurator was an unprincipled man, and infirm of purpose. He felt convinced that the Lord was the Blameless Victim of ill-will and jealousy, and he went out and told the priests and rabbis that he believed Him innocent. But he caught at what seemed to him a chance of escaping responsibility altogether. The Divine Prisoner was called *JESUS of Nazareth*; and Nazareth was in Galilee, and Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, was at this moment in Jerusalem for the Festival. The two rulers were not, indeed, on good terms, but Pilate could not resist referring the charge to Herod, and to Herod the Redeemer was accordingly conducted.

I feel while I write these sentences, how unworthy my words are of their Great Subject. Only the Bible can tell, as Such a Thing should be told, how He Who

came into the world to save sinners was thus dragged, a Prisoner, before one bad man after another, and judged by those who should have been worshipping Him. But remember, as you read this, that though I am only able to relate these Facts in commonplace words, like common history, there is really, in the whole history of the world, nothing in the slightest degree like them.

The chief priests and scribes, St. Luke says, *stood, and vehemently accused* the Blessed Saviour before Herod. But although the tetrarch questioned Him with eager curiosity, he could extract no answer. This made him angry, and, with *his men of war*, he *set Him at nought and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate*. Nevertheless he was as persuaded as Pilate had been that He Who bore Himself so nobly was innocent of all wrong. *And the same day*, we read, *Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves*. Pilate, however, had not been helped out of his difficulty ; so, as he lacked the courage to obey his conscience, and liberate the Blessed One, he now tried to take refuge in stratagem. It was the custom, every Passover, to set one prisoner free, and he bade the crowd choose, between the Silent Sufferer before them, and one Bar-Rabbas, the ringleader in a recent wild revolt against the Roman power, in which Roman blood had probably been shed. This Bar-Rabbas, now in prison, was well known as a bad and dangerous character, and Pilate felt so sure that the people must choose the Saviour, at least in preference to *him*, that he mounted his *Bema*, in readiness to confirm their choice. The *Bema*, or movable seat of justice, was incomplete without a tessellated pavement on which it stood, so that the separate pieces of marble were often carried loosely from place to place, and fitted together when it was wanted. The Hebrew name for this pavement was *Gabbatha*.

And now Pilate received a message from his wife, which increased his anxiety for the release of the Lord. *Have thou nothing to do*, she implored, *with that Just Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.* But her entreaty came too late. The priests and rabbis knew their power over the large crowd that had now collected, and they exerted it to the utmost. They gradually stirred the people into a frenzy of excitement, and with threats and bribes urged them to demand freedom for the plotter and the plunderer, rather than let Him escape Whom, but a few days before, they had greeted with loud Hosannas as the *Son of David!* They had their way. *All at once*, to the dismay of Pilate, the crowd shouted their dreadful decision. *Away with This Man!* they cried, *and release unto us Bar-Rabbas!* All was now wild uproar. In angry helplessness Pilate asked for water, and washed his hands publicly, calling loudly to the savage multitude: *I am innocent of the Blood of This Just Person! See ye to it!* But after only an instant's pause, an awful yell came back: *His Blood be on us, and on our children!*—*And what will ye then*, rejoined Pilate, *that I shall do unto Him Whom ye call the King of the Jews?* Then furiously uprose the clamour, like one great voice: *Crucify Him!*—But *why?* urged Pilate, *what evil hath He done?* To this question there was no reply, but *they cried out the more exceedingly: Crucify Him!*—Still the cowardly Pilate clung to one last faint hope: possibly, if these wild people saw Him—Who stood listening so quietly to their cries of hatred—unmercifully beaten, their hearts might be touched. So he summoned a party of soldiers, and gave orders that the Blessed One should be taken into the palace-court, and scourged.

I shrink from writing about this cruel torture. Drops of lead and sharp shreds of bone were often plaited into the lashes of the dreadful whip, and the bodies of the victims were so piteously torn

and gashed that death frequently took place before the scourging was over. But He Who lived and died for us, lived through the Beating to die upon the Cross. He bore the agony meekly,—and then, after the torture, came horrible mockery again. The cruel soldiers flung a cast-off scarlet war-cloak over His Holy Body, now bruised and bleeding,—they thrust upon His Brow a rude crown of long sharp thorns, and in His Right Hand a reed as a mock sceptre, and, bending the knee in heartless derision, they said, sneeringly, *Hail! King of the Jews!* Then snatching the reed from His passive Hand, they beat Him with it on the Head. And still He stood there, waiting, with an unwearying Patience of which we can barely think without tears, till His persecutors should tire of persecuting Him!

At length Pilate came, and led Him out before the crowd, wearing the mock-martial cloak and the thorny crown;—would not this Moving Spectacle be enough? *Behold the Man!* said Pilate. The Man, Christ JESUS. The Courage, the Strength, the Grandeur of His True Manliness were never indeed more apparent than now.—*Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My Sorrow!*—thus did He seem to say,—though He spoke not,—to all who had eyes to see, and hearts to feel. But His Appearance was only the signal for another outburst of wrath. Again the chief priests led, and the crowd took up, the horrid cry, *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!*—Pilate was vanquished, and in the tumult words floated to his ears that cowed him afresh: *By our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God!* And again: *If thou let This Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar!* Little cared the shouters for Cæsar, whose rule they really resented as a degradation. But those who prompted them knew well that Pilate would never dare to spare One Who had been openly accused of treason against the

emperor. Again the procurator ascended the steps of the judgment-seat, yet—at the last moment—he hesitated. *Behold your King!* he said, falteringly. But still more loudly the crowd shrieked, in a delirium of excitement and passion, *Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!*—But *shall I crucify your King?* asked Pilate, once more, wistfully. And the Jews forgot they were Jews, and their last cry was : *We have no king but Cæsar!* Then Pilate, deploring too late the consequences of his own weakness, *gave sentence that it should be as they required.* Hastily the Blessed One was seized, stripped of His robes of mockery, and hurried towards the city-gate, for the place of crucifixion lay outside. And with Him, also under guard, went two evildoers, who were to be crucified at the same hour and place.

Perhaps you have been wondering, from time to time, where Judas Iscariot was, during all these terrible scenes, for which he was mainly answerable. *Judas was dead.* When he heard that the Jews, under Caiaphas, had condemned his Master to death, a sudden conviction flashed across him of the awful thing that he had done. Satan, who had put it into his heart, had blinded his eyes until now. But now *he saw*, and he could not bear the sight. Rushing to “the chief priests and elders,” he exclaimed in anguish : *I have sinned! in that I have betrayed Innocent Blood.* But they laughed him to scorn. *What is that to us?* they said, heartlessly ; *see thou to that!* The time was past, you see, for “receiving him gladly ;” there was nothing to gain from him now. So Judas tossed down on the Temple floor the thirty silver pieces with which he had been paid for his guilty deed, and turned away in the wild darkness of despair. Remorse had come too late. Life was no longer tolerable. He *went and hanged himself*, and the branch—or the rope—breaking, his body fell heavily to the ground, and was afterwards found mangled as well as lifeless.

But his evil works did not end with his life. From him we turn to watch yonder sad procession, moving slowly through the gate of Jerusalem towards that low round hill outside, called Golgotha. In the midst of the throng are three condemned prisoners, each toiling under the weight of the cross to which he is about to be nailed. But One—strangely different from the others in aspect—exhausted by wounds and cruel beating, sinks under His burden, and can carry it no farther. It is the Lord! *wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace upon Him. And with Whose stripes we are healed.*

Seeing that the Blessed One was utterly worn out with pain and feebleness, the soldiers were obliged to lay His Cross upon a man whom they happened to meet at the moment, and thus, so far relieved, the Dear Lord again walked labouringly on to die. Behind Him crept sobbing women, whose tears were all the sympathy He had in that hard crowd. He heard them crying, and turned, with His Wonted Sweetness, to speak to them. *Daughters of Jerusalem! He said gently, weep not for Me! but weep for yourselves and for your children.* And He went on to warn them solemnly, as He had warned His disciples, of the dark days coming on the City which lay behind them, shining now in the morning sun, and gaily garlanded in Festival array.

And then—the slope was climbed, and the Last Short Journey was over,—and *the Hour had come.* There was a pause,—there were a few rapid preparations—and the soldiers came forward. They unclothed the Sacred Body,—they nailed the Blessed Hands and Feet,—the Cross, with its Divine Burden, was planted in the earth,—and *the Lord of Glory was crucified indeed.* Above His Head a board was fixed, inscribed—in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew—with the title that had so incensed His enemies: *This is Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews.* But crucifixion was not death,

though it was the terribly long and certain road to it. The charitable ladies of Jerusalem were in the habit of providing wine, mixed with some stupefying drug, for criminals on the cross, that their consciousness might be somewhat deadened while the lingering hours of torture rolled by. A draught of this merciful kind was now offered to the Blessed Lord, but He refused to cloud His Faculties or to lessen His Pain. He endured the very extremity of human suffering. He was publicly degraded too, like the malefactors on either side of Him, but He was "lifted up"—on the shameful cross of the slave—that He might "draw all men unto Him." *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BLESSED LIFE.

THERE was once a great painter, who was painting a picture of the Crucifixion Scene. He felt that he could not directly express two terrible things, which he nevertheless wanted to show to every thoughtful person who should look at his picture. One was the deadly rage of the fickle Jews, who had clamoured for the death of the Blessed Lord only five days after hailing Him as their King. The other was the awful Anguish of the Holy One upon the Cross, just before He uttered a Cry of Loneliness of which I have not yet spoken. The painter shrank, humbly and reverently, from attempting actually to depict either of these great and different emotions, but he succeeded in *suggesting* both in a wonderfully delicate and powerful manner. He drew attention to the first by introducing, among the shadows behind the Cross, an *ass-colt, feeding upon half-withered palm-leaves*, its rider meanwhile pointing with a rod to the Figure

the Crucified. No one could help understanding **the** meaning of this at a glance. But the other *hint*—if I may use the word—breathes a deeper and **far** more exquisite feeling. In all religious pictures the Head of the Blessed Lord is encircled by a *halo*, or ring of heavenly brightness, and by means of this the devout painter contrived to express himself. While veiling the Divine Countenance Itself in shadow, he made the “nimbus”—this glory about the Head, usually so bright,—pale, and faint, and wan, like ashes. Not nearer than this did he dare to draw to the Mysterious Desolation of the Most Holy Son of God. If in the olive-garden the night before, the Blessed One had felt—as we learn from the touching expression of St. Matthew and St. Mark—*far from Home*, how much more at this supreme moment? And could such a Feeling have been more forcibly expressed by that painter? I think not; but it is possible that some of you may one day see this great picture, and then you will be able to judge for yourselves.

I was led to speak of the pious painter’s beautiful way of avoiding undue familiarity with Things Divine, by the difficulty which I find in describing these Sacred Scenes to you. But words, you see, must needs be direct. However carefully I may speak, I seem to state far too composedly, and too bluntly, Events which transcend all that the history of the world has to tell. I have said something like this before, but you cannot be reminded too often that, whatever the shortcomings of our *words* may be, we ought to draw near, “to behold These Things,” with most reverent and chastened *feelings*.

The Cross of the Blessed Redeemer was not, as it is often represented, a high one. The Holy One hung only a foot or two above the ground, so that He was among the people still. And seven times, from first to last, He spoke from His Cross. The first three of these Utterances were for others. When the

careless soldiers, having crucified Him, mounted guard over Him, and sat down to divide His garments, He spoke, to pray for them, His murderers. *Father*, He breathed, *forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And then, as the weary morning hours dragged by, a few weeping mourners crept as close to Him as they could. There were His mother, and her sister, and other women, and John, His much-loved disciple. And looking tenderly down upon the well-known faces, and "loving them unto the end," He confided His broken-hearted mother to the filial care of John. *Woman*, He said to her, *behold thy son!*—and then to John *behold thy mother!* And the Evangelist tells us himself that from that hour he took the bereaved one to his own home.—But even in His Last Agony, the Lord JESUS was mocked and insulted, for "the rulers" encouraged the crowd to deride Him. *He saved others,* they cried scoffingly, *let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the Chosen of God!* And then the soldiers came nearer, and took up the gibe. Affecting to offer Him some of the acid wine and water which they were accustomed to drink themselves, they exclaimed contemptuously, *If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself!* And then from the very crosses on either side of Him came reviling taunts:—*If Thou be Christ,* muttered the suffering criminals, *save Thyself and us!* It is thought that these two "thieves," or plunderers, may very probably have been concerned in the revolt of Bar-Rabbas against the Roman power, and therefore—loud as had been the false cries of the crowd for Cæsar—they were not objects of popular scorn and hatred. But be this as it may, a change gradually came over the feelings of one of them. Perhaps his heart was won by the Dear Lord's quiet acceptance of all the hard words hurled at Him, for he called to his railing companion, and said: *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* And we

indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but This Man hath done nothing amiss. Then, to the Saviour Himself, he murmured imploringly, *Lord! remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom!* And this Blessed Answer came at once from the Suffering Seeker of all "lost sheep,"—*Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise!*

Noon at last drew near, but such a noontide as none who stood by had ever beheld before. A dreadful darkness came creeping up, and for three hours brooded over Golgotha like a mysterious pall. No longer could any gaze upon the Sacred Features of the Dying Son of God. In this midnight gloom all mockery subsided into awestruck silence, but we have no record of the feelings of any single person when the broad daylight was thus supernaturally obscured. At last, a Faint Voice spoke from the shrouded Cross, and said: *I thirst!* No part of the agony of the crucified was more intolerable than the burning thirst which tormented them. A soldier, doubtless accustomed to respond to such piteous appeals, steeped a sponge in the wine and water before mentioned, and raised it on the end of a stiff reed to the Blessed One's Mouth. And then a heart-rending Wail of Lonely Anguish rose from Him Who at that moment *His Own Self bare our sins in His Own Body on the Tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.* Darker far than the strange darkness around was the Son's sense of momentary separation from the Father by the thick cloud of man's transgressions. *My God! My God!* He cried, in that Aramaic dialect which had been the language of His Childhood, *why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Again the slow minutes went by in the darkness. And now, three o'clock, the hour of the evening sacrifice, was close at hand,—the Agonies of the Divine Sin-Bearer had reached their highest point. Again He spoke, but now in a Loud, Clear Voice. *It is finished!*

He cried, and He bowed His Blessed Head upon His Breast, and with His Parting Sigh He committed Himself—no longer *far from Home*—to His Father.—*Father*, He said, *into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit!*—and then He died. The Blessed Life was over. Forthwith an earthquake shook the land around. Chasms opened in the rocks, and tombs were thrown open by the convulsion. At the same moment the magnificent Veil-of-Partition in the Temple, rich with cunning embroideries in purple and in gold, was rent in two, from the top to the bottom. The Way into the Holy of Holies was opened once for all; no more sacrifices for sin would be needed, for by His Own Blood the Lamb of God had *obtained eternal redemption for us*. The stern Roman centurion in command of the soldiers on Golgotha must have been familiar enough with death; but a death like This he had never seen. *Truly*, he exclaimed, *This Man was the Son of God!*—*And all the people that came together to That Sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.* The Jewish custom, of ensuring death to the crucified after a given time, was respected by the Romans in Judea; and the soldiers were accordingly ordered to break the legs of the two still lingering sufferers. This shock sufficed to put out what spark of life remained. But as the Blessed Lord was dead already, His Limbs were left untouched. One of the soldiers, however, who was carrying a *hasta*—or light, wooden-handled spear—thrust its iron end, a hand's breadth wide, into His Side, and Blood and Water immediately flowed forth. Upon this circumstance a belief is based by very many, that the Holy One, the Man of Sorrows, died at last, literally—that is, physically—of a Broken Heart.

And now a secret disciple of the Lord, one Joseph of Arimathea, presented himself before Pilate, and obtained permission to remove the Sacred Body from the Cross. He was a rich man, and the owner of a

garden close to Golgotha, in which he had already prepared a tomb, hewn expressly in the rock. Having provided himself with fine linen in abundance, he hastened to the spot, knowing—yet caring not—that by coming in contact with the Dead he would cut himself off, as ceremonially “unclean,” from all the Passover festivities. He was soon joined by Nicodemus, another “secret disciple” of the Saviour, who had sought His Counsel by night, “for fear of the Jews,” but had never, till now, had the courage to avow Him openly. He brought a large quantity of the perfumes used in embalming, and these two men, as zealous now as they had been fearful before, were assisted in their labour of love by the faithful women who had never feared at all. The Precious, Wounded Body was reverently lowered from the Cross, tenderly bathed, wrapped with care in folds of the perfumed linen, and laid gently in the rocky recess prepared by Joseph. Then a massive stone was rolled up, and the mouth of The Grave was closed. And now all had been done that could be done, for the Sabbath was at hand, and the little company of mourners dispersed, the women having carefully noted the spot, for they meant to be there again soon. So the faithful footsteps died away, and all was quiet in the garden. The night wind swept past, and trembled in the trees, and the Passover moon shone full upon that heavy stone.

If you ever stand alone by a grave at night, and especially when the moonlight lies coldly upon it, you will know that there is no stillness like that, though now and again the wind may sob softly, or some sound of distant life come faintly over the fields:—that grave, alone in the next morning’s sunshine, will not seem to you half so lonely. Thus was it with the Grave under Golgotha, where Death for the first time had planted his foot.

But with the morning, though it was the Sabbath,

there came a sound: the steady tramp of soldiers. The Blessed Son of God lay dead, but still His enemies were not at ease. Early on this sacred morning, *the chief priests and Pharisees*, according to St. Matthew, *came together unto Pilate*, and communicated to him a new suspicion, that the disciples might perchance secretly remove their Master's Body from the Tomb, and then represent that He had risen from the dead. Pilate answered shortly that they could have a guard, and had better secure the stone as well as they could. So the soldiers received their orders, and a cord was drawn across the stone, and sealed with clay at both ends, and the restless "rulers" withdrew once more into the City. And the day wore away, and night came again, and still the soldiers watched,—and all was silent.

That night seemed long to the faithful eyes, weary with weeping, that were waiting impatiently for the first signs of dawn. At last it was morning, though as yet the eastern sky had scarcely begun to redden, and three women set out, laden with sweet spices, for the Garden where their Lord lay. They were Mary of Magdala, — commonly called Mary Magdalene, who had been delivered by the Blessed Saviour from the influence of seven evil spirits; Mary the sister of the Virgin and mother of the Apostle James the Less; and Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of John the Evangelist. Their purpose was to complete the embalming which had been effected in necessary haste on the evening of The Burial, and as they hurried along in the early twilight they wondered on whose strength they might depend, at such an hour, for the rolling away of the ponderous stone. Of the guard of soldiers and the official seals they knew nothing. Before they could even see the spot in the uncertain light, they felt the sudden shock of an earthquake; but still they pressed on, and it was not till they were near that they saw, to their unspeakable astonishment, the Tomb open, and empty. The Roman

sentinels were prostrate with terror, for they had seen an angel, whose *countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow*, descend from heaven, and roll away the mighty stone. But Mary of Magdala stayed only to be sure that the Beloved Body was no longer there, and then turned, in an agony of grief, and made all speed towards the City, to tell what had happened to Peter and to John. Where Peter had been hiding his humbled head, ever since the sad failure of his faith in the courtyard of Caiaphas, we do not know. But that his deep contrition was both real and lasting we do know well. No sooner did he now hear the tidings of Mary of Magdala, whose mind was pre-occupied with the one idea that the Body of the Lord had been seized by His ruthless enemies, than he set out with John for the Sepulchre.

In the meantime, however, the other women had remained, lost in perplexity, at the entrance of the Tomb. And suddenly they were aware of angels, white and shining, who said to them: *Why seek ye Him that liveth among the dead? He is risen,—He is not here! behold the place where they laid Him! But go your way,—tell His disciples, and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.* Bewildered with joy and surprise, the startled women hurried, with the amazing news, to the Apostles, but *their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.* Two of the Eleven, however, were already running, as you know, towards the Garden, followed by Mary of Magdala. John outstripped Peter, and was the first to look into the empty grave. But when Peter came up, he boldly entered the rocky recess, and was at once struck with its orderly state. There was no sign of violence, there were no marks of feet, there was nothing that could even be called disarrangement. On the contrary, the wrappings of the Holy Dead were laid carefully aside, and the fine linen that had bound the Sacred Head

was smoothly folded, and placed apart from the rest. Peter looked round and noted all this, and vague as his ideas were about the Resurrection of his Lord, he believed that He had Risen indeed. And now John stooped and entered too, and he also was convinced. Deeply impressed by the mysterious occurrences of the morning, they turned homewards, at present too confused to discern the full meaning of the Empty Tomb.

Death and the Grave had been conquered, and the First Easter Day had broken upon the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FIFTY DAYS.

FIVE times, before that Easter Day ended, did He Who had conquered death Himself gladden the eyes of those who loved Him. The first person to see Him after His Resurrection was Mary of Magdala, the last lingerer near the Empty Tomb. The angels who had spoken to the other women spoke also to her, but only to ask her why she wept. There was no need for them to say more, for their question was taken up and repeated by another Voice. Mary took it for granted that This must be the voice of the gardener, but, thinking he might possibly be able to throw some light on the mystery which so distressed her, she half turned—in the direction whence the Sound came—and said, supplicatingly : *Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away !* There was no answer, but presently the Voice, now nearer, pronounced her name as only One Voice in all the world could pronounce it :—*Mary !* She turned round hastily, and saw—her Beloved Lord. I cannot describe to you, I cannot myself imagine, her rapturous joy. The Holy One, however, bade her hasten at once to tell the Apostles that she had seen Him, and she obeye

her longing heart at rest at last ; but *they, when they had heard that He was Alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.* Meanwhile, the other faithful women, having delivered the message of the angels, were on their way back, by another path, to the Garden. And suddenly the Lord Himself stood before them, and said, *All hail !* And when they threw themselves down to worship Him, there followed the sweet, familiar Words, *Be not afraid !*

Afternoon came, and two who had loved the Redeemer well were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a village between seven and eight miles distant. As they paced along they naturally talked about what lay uppermost in their minds, and they were so absorbed in their conversation that they scarcely noticed a Stranger Who had suddenly joined them, until He spoke, and inquired why they were so sad. Wondering that One Who seemed to be coming from Jerusalem should ask such a question, they poured out the sad Story of their Beloved Master's Sufferings and Death, and the mysterious disappearance of His Dead Body. But they were still more surprised when their Companion reproached them for being so downcast, and pointed out to them that in these Events Scriptural prophecy had been accurately fulfilled. His Voice thrilled them, though they knew not why, for *their eyes were holden*, and they did not recognise Him. But when they reached Emmaus, they were unwilling to part with One Who had taught and comforted them so much. *Abide with us !* they exclaimed, *for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent ;* and the Stranger graciously consented to become their Guest. Presently, while sitting with them at their evening meal, *He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.* And in that act they knew Him. Some well-known Manner, or Tone of Voice, or possibly the nail-marks in His Hands, revealed Him. It was the Lord indeed, and the strong

emotion they had felt as they listened to Him was explained. But in that joyous moment of recognition He was gone! He had faded from their sight as a mist fades.—It was dark by this time, but they heeded not the darkness; they set out at once for Jerusalem again, in impatient haste to tell What they had seen to other disconsolate disciples.

All the Apostles, except Thomas, were in an upper room in some friendly house in the City, together with others who had loved, and now deplored, the Blessed Redeemer. The doors were fastened, for fear of the wrathful priests and "rulers." These false teachers had heard from the Roman sentinels of the angel's descent and the Empty Grave. And resolutely hardening their hearts even against such evidence, they bribed the soldiers to circulate the false report that they had fallen asleep on guard, and that the disciples had seized that opportunity of removing the Sacred Body. This story was widely accepted, but as it told against the soldiers, the priests were obliged to guarantee their safety from punishment for their supposed neglect.—Eager feet came through the darkness to the closed doors of the upper chamber, and eager voices demanded admittance;—the two friends from Emmaus came in with their story, as beautiful as it was true. They *told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread.* But they had something to learn, as well as much to tell. For they were greeted with the tidings that the Risen Lord had appeared to Peter. *To Peter*, who had thrice denied Him, twice with passionate oaths! This day, for the first time since *the Lord turned*, as the cock crew, *and looked upon Peter*, the Master and His penitent Apostle had met. But where, and at what hour, and how—except that they were alone—we know not. There are some meetings, as well as some partings too sacred to be described. Two little words in th

angels' message may perhaps have prepared the humbled disciple, in some measure, for such a meeting. "Tell His disciples," they had said, *and Peter.*

Nine of the ten Apostles present in "the upper room" had not as yet beheld their Risen Lord. They had listened attentively to the evidences just exchanged; they had heard all that the trusty women had to tell; but—as they compared the testimony of this eye-witness and of that—they were beyond measure perplexed. They were wholly unprepared for the new conditions of that New Life to which the Son of man had risen. He appeared, it seemed, and disappeared—was seen, and was gone—but He had not returned to the old, continuous, homely life, and they could comprehend no other. But the marvels of this great day were not yet at an end. Presently, there was a sudden dead silence in the room. Every eager speaker stopped short and started. No door had opened, no footstep had sounded, but the Lord JESUS was there! His Own Beloved Voice broke the strange stillness with the sweet Words: *Peace be unto you!* But even then the disciples thought their senses were deceiving them, and that they beheld a Vision, or a disembodied Spirit. *Why are ye troubled?* asked the Holy One, kindly, *behold My Hands and My Feet, that it is I Myself!* Still, grief was slow to change into joy,—still, it seemed all too beautiful to be true. Then, as a last convincing proof of His actual Bodily Presence, He asked for food, and ate it. And at last, all the ten Apostles ventured to be "glad" once more. *Peace be unto you!* said their Gracious Lord again,—as *My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you!* And, breathing upon them, He added: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost! Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.* And it was all over, and the Beloved Form was no longer to be discerned. Silently and suddenly, as He

had appeared, the Blessed Saviour had disappeared, and the First Easter Day was at an end.

When Thomas was told of all that had happened in his absence, he would not believe it. He thought his fellow-Apostles were the victims of a delusion. He must *see*, he said, before he could believe such wonders as they reported. But a week passed away, and the Lord came not.—Again the First Day came round, and again the Apostles—Thomas among the rest—were in the upper chamber, the doors being carefully secured as before. And suddenly their Beloved Master was with them once more, announcing Himself with the same beautiful Greeting: *Peace be unto you!* Then, turning to Thomas, He said: *Reach hither thy finger, and behold My Hands! and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My Side! and be not faithless, but believing.*—*And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God!*—*Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed!*

After this the Apostles left Jerusalem for Galilee, as their Divine Master had bidden them, and some of them, at least, returned to their old occupations. Not many times more would they behold their Lord during the Forty Days which followed His Resurrection. But that, wherever they went, they were continually conscious of His Invisible Presence we cannot doubt. He walked among them no longer, and nothing for evermore could harm Him, but His Glorified Body was freed from all the restrictions of time and space, and One Who was always near *might*, whensoever He willed, be seen. So that a beautiful expectation and readiness were intertwined with their daily work; the commonest details of every-day life must have seemed gilded. One morning, very early, seven of them were fishing on the familiar lake. They had been out all night without any success. Suddenly a Voice called to them from the shore, inquiri

whether they had any fish? They shouted, *No!* and very probably thought the question came from some impatient customer. But again the clear Voice spoke across the water, and now It said: *Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find.* They did so, and immediately the net was overweighted with fish. But while the others were mechanically obeying this Voice of command, John had been straining his gaze to discern the Figure Whose Voice It was. *It is the Lord!* he now exclaimed abruptly. And when Peter heard that, he seized his garment—flung aside while he was helping to haul the net—and, plunging into the water, swam to his Master's Feet. Then the boat, with her heavy freight, was brought ashore, and the Apostles were astonished to find preparations for a simple meal made upon the beach. Bread was there, and fish already lay over a brightly burning charcoal fire; to these the Blessed Lord desired them to add some of those which they had just caught, and when the net was emptied, they counted no fewer than a hundred and fifty-three. And then, by the Gracious Invitation of their Divine Master, the seven, in their rough boating dress, gathered round the mysteriously provided meal, and received the bread and fish from His Own Hands. After a while, Peter, still wet from his impetuous swim,—*and thinking a little, perhaps*, it has been touchingly said, *of what happened by another coal-fire, when it was colder*—was startled, and somewhat pained by this Question, thrice repeated by his Master: *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?* Each time he answered eagerly, *Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!* and twice the Holy One responded, *Feed My lambs!* while the third time the commission was, *Feed My sheep!* Thus he who had thrice denied was thrice searchingly probed, and then restored to his old position among the Apostles. But I must pause for a moment to show you something beautiful here, which appears in the Greek, though not in the English Testament. 11

His Question, "*Lovest thou?*" the Lord twice employed a verb signifying calm and steadfast attachment ; but Peter, in answering "*I love Thee!*" used a much stronger and warmer word, which means, rather, intense personal devotion. And the *third* time of putting His Question the Holy One showed His delicate Sympathy with His penitent servant by laying aside the more stately word, and taking up Peter's own !—And then followed an intimation of dark days to come, when the passionate love of this Apostle should be severely tested, and he should follow the Footsteps of his Blessed Master, even to the Cross.

But I must hasten on to tell of another Appearance of the Glorified Saviour, on one of the Galilean mountains. This was not an unexpected Manifestation, for the Apostles were expressly told where to await Him. All the Eleven were there, and—in all probability—as many as five hundred disciples besides. And now the Apostles received their great commission. *All power,* declared the Lord JESUS Christ, *is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye into all the world, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe All Things Whatsoever I have told you. And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

And now the "Great Forty Days," illuminated by Manifestations such as these, were drawing to an end. Shortly before the Feast of Weeks—or Pentecost—the Eleven left Galilee for Jerusalem, where their Risen Lord again appeared to them, and *opened*, as we read, *their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures ; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye, He added, as He looked round upon them, are witnesses of These*

Things. And behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you! but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endowed with Power from on high. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Soon after this there came a day ever to be remembered. The Blessed Lord appeared, and called His Apostles to walk with Him, as in the olden times, along the familiar road—so strewn with associations fond and sad—towards Bethany. Passing over the ridge of Olivet, they paused with Him on the farther slope, just where the first glimpse of the village was caught. Then He turned, and lifting His Holy Hands, pierced, in all their Glory, with the cruel nail-marks, He solemnly blessed them all, and even as He blessed He receded upwards from them, and they saw Him ascend—slowly—slowly—higher—and yet higher—through the clear summer blue, until a snowy cloud, far up above, hid Him from their wistful gaze. This, they knew, was Departure indeed. Not a sudden withdrawal into the Invisible, but a slow and gradual Ascension, in His Glorified *Human Body*, through the unknown realms of the air, “to His Father and their Father, and to His God and their God.” Long they watched that soft cloud beyond which the Beloved Form, unseen by them, was still mounting, higher and higher; but voices at length recalled them to earth, and, looking round, they saw two white-robed angelic beings, who said to them: *Ye men of Galilee! why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same JESUS, Which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.* So they looked up longingly no more, but with thankful hearts turned their faces again towards Jerusalem, where they *all continued with one accord, in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of JESUS, and with His brethren.*

The Forty Days, with their Visitations of

unspeakable comfort, were over : it now remained to wa't for the Promised Gift of that Other Comforter, the Holy Spirit. In this interval a twelfth Apostle was elected to occupy the place left empty by Judas of Kerioth. The choice seemed to lie between two men, both long-faithful disciples, who had seen the Blessed Saviour after His Resurrection ; so lots were cast, but before they were drawn the Eleven prayed earnestly that He "Who knew the hearts of all men, would show which of the two He had chosen." The lot then fell on *Matthias*, and he accordingly filled the vacant post.—Ten days of waiting passed, and then came the Feast of Pentecost. This Festival occurred at the close of the early harvest, and although it lasted but a single day, it was attended by crowds from far and near. Fifty days had now passed since the Resurrection, and the enemies of the Blessed Lord in Jerusalem believed themselves triumphant. I have told you how busily they had circulated a false report about the Empty Grave, and now all excitement about What had taken place on Golgotha seemed to them to have died away ; the followers of *JESUS of Nazareth* were left without a leader, and the whole Story, they thought, would soon be forgotten.

But on this Fiftieth Day, while the Twelve were assembled in their "upper room" as usual, suddenly *there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.* And tongues of flickering light appeared and rested upon each of them ; whereupon *they were filled with the Holy Ghost*, and began to speak in foreign languages, hitherto quite unknown to them. And now a crowd of citizens and strangers, attracted by the unwonted *sound from heaven*, hastened to the house, and stood amazed when they found the simple fishermen of Galilee declaring, in one foreign dialect after another, *the wonderful Works of God*. Then Peter, acting as spokesman for the Twelve, addressed th

strangely mixed assembly, and boldly published the Great Truths of the Resurrection, and Ascension into the highest heavens, of One Who only fifty-three days before had died a death of violence and shame in that very City. *Repent!* he cried, *and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of JESUS Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost!* Thus did he become, as his Dear Lord and Master had predicted, *a fisher of men*; nor, among the human beings now within call, had he cast forth his net in vain. For *many gladly received his word, and were baptized, and the same day there were added to the Church—that is, to the Society of the faithful—about three thousand souls.*

CHAPTER XV.

AFTERWARDS.

MANY a harsh compound word has a place in “the dictionary,” but there is one, not harsh at all, which I doubt our finding there. Yet I suppose most children who do not always live in a town will know at once what I mean by the *afterglow*. All who have ever watched a fine summer sunset in open country, or over the sea, will agree with me that it is at least an expressive word. For it is more than light that the glorious sun leaves behind; it is a wealth of far-stretching warmth, and colour, and purity. I have sometimes turned suddenly inland, after watching the sun sink on a western coast, and have beheld, far away to the eastward—as far as eye could see—such a flood of the richest pink, and violet, and gold, and crimson, that the splendour made me forget for the moment that the sun had disappeared.

The lives of the little flock left by the Good Shepherd to the care of His Apostles, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, possessed the peculiar beauties of

an *afterglow*. The warmth, and the brightness, and the purity were all expressed in a holy *enthusiasm*, which truly and immediately reflected that Living "Light of the world" now withdrawn into the Invisible. We look with attentive interest into the habits of the early Church, because there had been no time then, so to speak, for this *Afterglow* to fade. Many of them, it is true, could not be adopted in the present condition of society, but we may nevertheless learn a great deal from them: and the first point we note is their simplicity, not a common thing in these days. Those first Christians had no separate interests; they shared all that they had with each other. *All that believed*, says St. Luke, *were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.* Thus did they keep the New Commandment which the Blessed Saviour had given them, and all who saw them did indeed know that they were His disciples because they had *love one to another*.

And they *continued steadfastly in the doctrine* as well as "the fellowship" of the Apostles, who—by the Power of the Holy Spirit—wrought "many wonders and signs." What the "Apostles' doctrine" was we know very well. They simply imparted to others what they had learnt themselves from their Divine Master, *teaching them to observe All Things Whatsoever He had commanded them.* The constant obedience of the early Christians to His Dying Command is specially recorded. There is very little doubt that *the breaking of the bread*, as this observance is called by St. Luke, was a daily occurrence. For at first, the Great Sacrifice of the Lamb of God was commemorated before or after the chief common meal of the day. It was only afterwards, when abuses had crept in, and the pure *enthusiasm* of the great "Afterglow" had chilled somewhat, and grown pale, that a different arrangement was made as to time and place.

Prayer, public and private, was the mainstay of this earliest Christian Community, and we are told that the disciples *had favour with all the people*, so we may be sure that they were kind, and just, and patient, and strove—helped mightily by the Holy Spirit—in some degree to resemble Him Who had won “publicans and sinners” by His Way of treating them.

Of course there were imperfections, for these people were weak and sinful like ourselves, and as time went by, those whose motive was not the only lasting one—whom the Love of Christ did not constrain—fell away. But Peter's own history must have taught him, for one, how to deal with the faulty. His character was now transformed; he had learnt humility from his falls. When, in the Holy Name of his Master, he had cured a cripple at the Temple gate, he indignantly and publicly disclaimed any “power or holiness” of his own, and his earnest eloquence so impressed the people that a very great many came forward at once to join the followers of *JESUS of Nazareth*. But enemies were on the watch. The captain of the Temple Guard suddenly appeared, with certain priests and “rulers,” and arresting Peter, as well as the man he had just cured, and John, who was with him, put them into prison for the night. The Sadducean party took the lead in this proceeding, and the reason was that they disbelieved the doctrine of the Resurrection altogether, and could not bear the Apostles to preach it. The Pharisees, on the other hand, many of whom had taken part in the persecution of the Blessed Redeemer, professed contempt for these Galilean fishermen, and affected to believe that the excitement they were occasioning would die a natural death. Morning came, and the two Apostles were brought before the Jewish Council. Annas and Caiaphas were there, and other persons of note, and as the prisoners appeared they were required to state in whose name and by what authority the lame man

had been healed. And Peter, as bold now as he once was cowardly, answered without a moment's hesitation. *Be it known unto you all, he said, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of JESUS Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole ! —Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved !*—The "rulers" listened in astonishment. Perceiving that the Apostles were *unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled*, writes St. Luke, *and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with JESUS.* After a brief private consultation it was decided, however, to let them go, but not without a caution as to the future. They were accordingly dismissed with the command *not to speak at all, nor teach, in the Name of JESUS.* But neither Peter nor John would accept freedom on such terms. *Whether it be right in the Sight of God,* they answered, *to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye ! for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* Still the authorities dared not detain them, in the face of the strong popular feeling in their favour. So they only repeated their orders, and Peter and John returned to their fellow Apostles, who prayed earnestly with them that in spite of all threats they might still have boldness to "speak the Word of the Lord." Their prayer was answered almost before it was ended ; the dwelling trembled as if with an earthquake, and immediately they felt themselves strengthened anew by the Holy Spirit, so that they preached and taught henceforward with redoubled courage. Their influence increased daily ; *with great power gave they witness of the Resurrection of the Lord JESUS, and great Grace was upon them all.* As yet, too, perfect unity of feeling had reigned in the Christian Society. *The multitude of them that believed, we read were of one heart and of one soul.*

interpretation is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died. Her friends knew that Peter was not far off, and they sent a messenger to Lydda, to tell him what had occurred, and to beg him to come. On his arrival he found the corpse of the charitable woman laid ready for burial, but having gently dismissed the mourners from the room, he knelt down by the bed, and prayed for the restoration of a life so valuable. Then, turning to the body, he said: *Tabitha, arise!* and forthwith the eyes opened that had closed so heavily in death. The poor people of the town, rejoicing to see their kind friend alive and well again, were naturally disposed to embrace a faith to which they owed such a blessing. And thus it happened that Peter found a widening field of labour in Joppa, and decided to remain there for some little time. He took up his abode in the house of a tanner, named Simon. The spot where this house is believed to have stood is to this day pointed out in the south-west corner of the town. A large fig-tree is growing there now, and close by there is a spring, which Simon may have used in his business if he worked at home, that is, if no other houses were then near. But no tanyard was allowed to be within fifty cubits of a town, for the tanning trade—in which the dead bodies and hides of many “unclean” animals were necessarily handled—was regarded by the Jews with especial disgust. So strong was their feeling on the subject, that if a tanner married without avowing his calling, his wife was entitled to a divorce. It was therefore in defiance of Jewish prejudices that Peter consented—possibly chose—to lodge with a tanner. And it was on the roof of the tanner’s house that he learnt to conquer larger and more serious prejudices. He had one day retired to this flat roof—perhaps even then overshadowed by a fig-tree—for his noontide prayers.

Force was quite unnecessary, however, for they presented themselves readily before the council, and Peter, speaking for the rest, again announced their determination to obey the Commands of their Lord and Master. Upon this dark looks were exchanged among the angry "rulers," and a whisper went round that death alone could fitly punish such arrogance. But Gamaliel, a rabbi of high repute, overruled his colleagues. He represented that the prudent plan would be to leave the Galileans alone, for if their teaching was really false their influence would gradually dwindle away, whereas, if it should prove to be Divinely inspired, no efforts would avail to overthrow it. The Apostles were therefore again dismissed, but not till they had been beaten with rods, and threatened with worse penalties if they persisted in their present course. Nevertheless, they were quite undismayed,—nay, they *rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of their Beloved Lord. And daily in the Temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach JESUS Christ.*

I have said enough about the Apostolic band to show you what manner of life they lived. Much, as in the earlier parts of the Gospel history, must here be left untold, but I propose to occupy the few remaining pages of this chapter with the account of one or two remarkable passages in the life of Peter.

A few years after the incident just related, this Apostle set out to visit the various Churches—or Christian Societies—by that time established in Palestine. While pausing at a place called Lydda, about nine miles from the seaport town of Joppa, he met with a paralytic sufferer who had been for eight years confined to his bed. *Aeneas!* said Peter, calling him by his name, *JESUS Christ maketh thee whole! Arise, and make thy bed.* And the man arose, in perfect health, immediately. *Now there was at Joppa,* says St. Luke, *a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by*

the northward. His name was Cornelius, and he was an officer belonging to a detachment of Italian troops,—probably volunteers—which roughly corresponded, in numbers, to an English battalion. While he prayed an angel appeared to him, and having assured him that his prayers and his alms had *come up for a memorial before God*, bade him send men to Joppa, to summon—from the house of a tanner by the side of the sea—one *Simon, surnamed Peter*: he, when he came, would tell him what more to do. And it was the knocking of these messengers that had disturbed Peter in his “pondering” over the remarkable vision he had seen. The Apostle willingly went back with them, as bidden, to Cæsarea, and, having received a hearty and respectful welcome from Cornelius, he addressed the people who had assembled in expectation of his arrival. He began with a frank acknowledgment of his own narrow Jewish prejudice against other races: *Ye know*, he said, *how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.* Cornelius then explained why he had sent for him, and declared the anxiety of all present to hear what God would assuredly inspire him to say. Peter was profoundly impressed. *Of a truth*, he exclaimed, *I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him!* And then he poured forth, with his accustomed eloquence, the Glad Tidings of forgiveness of sins to all who should believe in Him “Whom the Jews slew, but God raised up on the third day.” And while he was still speaking, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word*, “and they spake with tongues, magnifying God.” Then Peter looked round, and asked whether any one could presume to forbid water for the baptism of these Gentiles, who had thus

manifestly received the Gift of the Spirit. And having *commanded them to be baptised in the Name of the Lord*, he consented to stay a few days where so great a work had been begun.

I have still a little more to tell you about this warm-hearted and energetic Apostle, but for that I must find room in the course of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

ST. STEPHEN AND ST. PAUL.

IN some old-fashioned gardens an old-fashioned flower is still to be found, which is—or used to be—called “the Marvel of Peru.” I suppose it came from America in the days when everything American was considered a wonder. Nevertheless it has always been wonderful and delightful to me. But I fear few of the present generation of children know it, for it has been chased out of most modern gardens, with many another honest flower. I had not seen it for a long time until one day, three years ago, when I caught sight of it in a very small cottage garden, within sound of the Cornish sea. There it had grown comfortably into quite a big bush, so that its starry flowers looked out on the world from a height of three feet above the ground. I walked past that little garden as often as I could, on purpose to look at the Marvel of Peru, for it had a voice for me that called back years long gone. The charm of this quaint plant is that its flowers differ from one another in colour. You may see a red, and a yellow, and a white, and a chestnut-brown, and a pink, all on the same root, and all in bloom together. In rainy weather the flowers fold themselves up tightly, but the moment the sun breaks through the clouds, all their variegated beauty comes out to meet it.

I have been thinking of the great varieties

character and disposition among the early disciples of the Lord Jesus. Yet each was beautiful in its own way and degree, and all the beauty grew out of One Root, *the constraining Love of Christ*; and all the brightness depended on the Sun of Righteousness. It is the same with His servants in these days; let the curious Marvel of Peru—if you ever meet with it—remind you of this, for it is a good and pleasant thing to link with any flower some thought of Him Who made it.

I am going to say a little now about two devoted disciples of the Lord, who in various ways were different from any of the Twelve.

Some years before Peter's visit to Cornelius, it was found that the Apostles needed helpers. They were so busy in pastoral work that they had no time for other necessary, though secondary, duties. So seven men of blameless character were appointed *Deacons*. They were to distribute the funds of the Community, and to attend to various details of what we should call an "administrative" kind, so that the Twelve might devote themselves entirely to teaching and preaching. The first name on the list of Deacons is *Stephen*, and these words follow the name: *a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost*. We know very little about Stephen's previous life, but it is believed that he had known and loved the Blessed Saviour when He was on earth. He combined the offices of Deacon and Evangelist, and being fluent in speech, and an able reasoner, he proved a most valuable fellow-worker. Full of faith and zeal, he became full also of Power, and, like the Apostles, *did great wonders and miracles among the people*. But it was not for long. He belonged to the "Hellenists," or foreign Jews, who were to a great extent free from the local prejudices of the "Hebrews," or Jews of Palestine. And his boldness soon brought him into trouble. He was arrested and carried before the Council, while false witnesses came forward, as they had done at the trial

of One greater than he, and deposed that they had heard him *speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God*. But Stephen flinched not; and so radiant was his face with *the Love of Christ*, that even to his stern enemies it seemed like "the face of an angel." He replied to the charge in a very powerful speech, reviewing the whole history of the Chosen People. The authorities listened with attention—nay, almost with pride—so long as Jewish privileges were his subject, but when he wound up by declaring that they themselves had been the betrayers and murderers of the Messiah, and were now "resisters of the Holy Ghost," their faces changed rapidly, and they ground their teeth with rage. Stephen, however, scarcely saw their looks of hatred. Lifting his eyes upward, he exclaimed, in a holy rapture: *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the Right Hand of God!* Standing, as if—it has been beautifully suggested—He had risen from His Throne, first to strengthen, and then to receive, His devoted servant. It is not recorded that any one except Stephen ever spoke of the Blessed Redeemer as *the Son of man*; the Name occurs elsewhere only as used by the Holy One Himself. The joyous exclamation of the prisoner sealed his doom. Beside themselves with passion, the councillors sprang from their seats. They waited not to depute officials, but themselves rushed forward upon their victim, and dragged him outside the city gate, to immediate and violent death. He was to be stoned. But not with the solemn ceremonies usual among the Jews. Heavy stones were collected and flung with the haste of unbridled fury, and no "bitter draught containing a grain of frankincense" was offered him, "to stupefy his senses, and take away the edge of terror." But he needed it not, and would have refused it, for he felt no terror. The stones flew thick and fast, but he looked up again to Heaven, with a foretaste of Heaven's

calm, and spoke to Him Whom he had seen waiting for him. *Lord JESUS*, he said, *receive my spirit!* Then, bruised and mortally wounded, he dropped on his bleeding knees, and gathered up his last energies into a dying prayer for his murderers. *Lord!* he cried, "with a loud voice,"—*lay not this sin to their charge!* And then it was over. *He fell asleep*, says St. Luke expressively, presenting us—in the midst of that savage scene—with an image of the Peace Which passeth all understanding, bequeathed, to such as Stephen, by the Prince of Peace.

One established custom *was* duly observed in this stoning of the first martyr. Those who had borne witness against him took the lead in the stone-flinging. And they threw aside their upper garments to allow the arm freer play. These garments were laid down at the feet—that is, in the charge—of a *young man whose name was Saul*.

Some four years afterwards, the "man named Saul" thus prayed to Him for Whose Sake St. Stephen had died: *Lord! they—the Jews—know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee; and when the blood of Thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him!* And the Lord vouchsafed this Answer: *Depart! for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles*. Here you have an outline, in his own words, of the life of St. Paul. For Saul of Tarsus, who sympathized with the stoners of St. Stephen, was afterwards called the Apostle Paul, and only One Story in the New Testament is more wonderful than his.

Possibly I may some day write, for such of you as may care to have it, a little book entirely about St. Paul. I feel very strongly that his history cannot properly be "sketched" for children. This is partly because it must include some notice of his writings, which fill no less than thirteen books of the New

Testament, and partly because it is so full of movement that it cannot be fairly represented without various explanations and descriptions, which take up room. So I shall only attempt to show you here one or two marked points of difference between St. Paul and the other Apostles. He was no Galilean fisherman, poor, unlearned, and obscure ; on the contrary, he was born to comfortable circumstances, at Tarsus, the capital town of a Roman province, and educated with the utmost care. The trade which, like all Jewish lads, he learnt, became in after days his support, but it was with no such object that he mastered the knack of weaving goat's hair into tent-coverings. He was the pupil, probably from the age of thirteen, of Gamaliel, that prudent rabbi of whom you have already heard. And it was a favourite saying of this celebrated teacher, that "learning of any kind, unaccompanied by a trade, ends in nothing, and leads to sin."

Saul of Tarsus grew up a zealous as well as a cultivated Pharisee ; into his religion, such as it was, he threw all the energy of his character. The Letter of the Law, in which he was thoroughly versed, became his idol, and its defence his solitary pride. Thus when St. Stephen was charged with "blasphemy against Moses"—that is, against the law which Moses gave—this Cilician zealot regarded him as an enemy. Nor was his fiery ardour quenched in the martyr's blood. A fierce persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem followed, and while *devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him, Saul made havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and, haling men and women, committed them to prison.* And presently, hearing that many Christian fugitives had assembled in Damascus, he wended his furious way to the far north, *still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.* His hurried journey was nearly over—beautiful Damascus, with her rose-gardens, her walnut trees, her

green and fruit-crowned hedges, was within sight—when a Light more vivid than the blaze of the noon-day sun dazzled him, and struck him to the ground, while a Voice smote his ear with the inquiry: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* Stunned and bewildered, he could only ejaculate: *Who art Thou, Lord?* And This Reply thrilled him through and through, and altered, in an instant, the whole current of his life: *I am JESUS of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest!*

Thus was the great missionary Apostle "called." Could anything be more different from the quiet "Follow Me!" which had drawn one humble fisherman after another from the lake-side in Galilee? And when, after a time, he who had left Jerusalem on an errand of persecution came back to plead for admission into the Community which he had persecuted, the disciples very naturally held aloof, being "all afraid of him." But there was one exception. Peter, always warm-hearted and forgiving, received him kindly, and with him he abode fifteen days. The people of Jerusalem, however, would not accept as a missionary one whom they had so lately known as a persecutor, and of course all Saul's old friends turned from him in horror. And then it was that, as you have heard, he received his special commission "to preach to the Gentiles." He left Jerusalem accordingly, and went first to Tarsus, and its familiar neighbourhood. After some time he was called to Antioch, the chief town of Syria, and it was at Antioch that the disciples of the Lord were first called—very likely in irony—*Christians*. I have applied that name to them in this little book, ever since recording the Pentecostal Outpouring, both for the sake of clearness, and because in very deed and in truth they were "followers of Christ." But they had hitherto *called each other* by no more distinctive name than "the faithful," "believers," "saints," or "brethren."

When Saul next came to Jerusalem, it was as one

of the bearers of charitable contributions made in Antioch, when a famine was at hand, for the "brethren in Judea." But this time Peter was not able to receive him with his wonted heartiness, for he was in prison, waiting to be murdered as soon as the Pass-over festivities should be over. Herod Agrippa I., then the vassal-king of Judea, had sought to please the unbelieving Jews by seizing and killing the Apostle James, and finding that this gratified them, he had arrested Peter also, to the great distress of the whole Christian Community. Earnest prayer was offered that the Apostle's doom might be averted, and it was not offered in vain. The night before he was to be executed, Peter was aroused by beams of unearthly light, and an angel appeared, at whose touch the chains were loosened which bound him to his guards. Then, one after another, the prison doors opened silently, and the Apostle followed his deliverer safely out into the street, and was among his friends again before their prayers for him were ended; but when Herod found that his prisoner had escaped him, he revenged himself on the unoffending sentinels, and put them to death instead of him. Paul also was once delivered in a most wonderful way from prison, but that story, as well as many others, must be told in the story of his whole life, which, as I have said, I may perhaps write for you some day.

I have told you that Peter was the one Apostle who ventured to welcome Saul of Tarsus as a brother. There came a time when Paul showed equal courage in a very different manner. He openly rebuked Peter for a relapse into some of his old Jewish ways of thinking. But Paul's reproof was just, and Peter was too generous and true-hearted to take offence at it; he afterwards referred admiringly to the letters of *his beloved brother Paul*, one of which contained an account of this very rebuke of himself. Thus you see that the disciples of the Blessed Saviour did

indeed *love one another*, as He had commanded them, and they loved Truth still more, but for *self-love* there was no room in their overflowing hearts.

The other little book took its way, from the First Garden onwards, through the "shadows" of human life. About the path of this little book, too, we have found "shadows," heavy and terrible, sometimes lying. Yet between them there is a vast difference, which Better Words than mine shall thus explain:—*The people that walked in darkness have seen a Great Light; they that dwell in the land of the Shadow of Death, upon them hath THE LIGHT shined!*

And as to St. Paul, whose life I cannot write here, let him tell you himself of the "shadows" which he braved most joyously for the Sake of His Beloved Master, the LORD JESUS CHRIST:—*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.—If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.—I count all things but loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD!*

THE END.

SCIENCE PRIMERS.

UNDER THE JOINT EDITORSHIP OF

**PROFESSORS HUXLEY, ROSCOE, AND
BALFOUR STEWART.**

“They are wonderfully clear and lucid in their instruction, simple in style and admirable in plan.”—*Educational Times*.

The following are now ready:—

CHEMISTRY. By H. E. ROSCOE, F.R.S., Professor of Chemistry in Owens College, Manchester. 18mo. Illustrated. 1s. With Questions.

PHYSICS. By BALFOUR STEWART, F.R.S., Professor of Natural Philosophy in Owens College, Manchester. 18mo. Illustrated. 1s. With Questions.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY. By A. GEIKIE, F.R.S., Murchison Professor of Geology and Mineralogy at Edinburgh. 18mo. Illustrated. 1s. With Questions.

GEOLOGY. By Professor GEIKIE, F.R.S. With numerous Illustrations. 18mo. 1s.

PHYSIOLOGY. By MICHAEL FOSTER, M.D., F.R.S. With numerous Illustrations. 18mo. 1s.

ASTRONOMY. By J. NORMAN LOCKYER, F.R.S. With numerous Illustrations. 18mo. 1s.

BOTANY. By Sir J. D. HOOKER, K.C.S.I., C.B., President of the Royal Society. Illustrated. 18mo. 1s.

LOGIC. By Professor STANLEY JEVONS, F.R.S. 18mo. 1s.

POLITICAL ECONOMY. By Professor JEVONS, F.R.S. 18mo. 1s.

INTRODUCTORY. By Prof. HUXLEY, F.R.S.
[Preparing with others.]

MACMILLAN AND CO., LONDON.

HISTORY AND LITERATURE PRIMERS.

Edited by JOHN RICHARD GREEN,
Author of "A Short History of the English People."

In 18mo, cloth, price 1s. each.

HOMER. By the Right Hon. W. E. GLADSTONE.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR EXERCISES. By R. MORRIS, LL.D., and H. C. BOWEN.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR. By R. MORRIS, LL.D.

HISTORY OF ROME. By M. CREIGHTON, M.A.
With Maps.

HISTORY OF GREECE. By C. A. FYFFE, M.A.
With Maps.

ENGLISH LITERATURE. By the Rev. STOPFORD BROOKE, M.A.

HISTORY OF EUROPE. By E. A. FREEMAN, D.C.L., LL.D. With Maps.

GREEK ANTIQUITIES. By J. P. MAHAFFY, M.A. Illustrated.

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES. By Prof. A. S. WILKINS. Illustrated.

CLASSICAL GEOGRAPHY. By H. F. TOZER.

GEOGRAPHY. By GEORGE GROVE, F.R.G.S. With Maps.

CHILDREN'S TREASURY OF LYRICAL POETRY. By F. T. PALGRAVE. In Two Parts. 1s. each.

SHAKSPERE. By Prof. DOWDEN.

PHILOLOGY. By J. PEILE, M.A.

GREEK LITERATURE. By Prof. JEBB, M.A.

FRANCE. By CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

GEOGRAPHY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND. By JOHN RICHARD GREEN and ALICE STOPFORD GREEN. With Maps.

ENGLISH COMPOSITION. By Professor NICHOL.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LONDON.



